

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:
A HISTORY OF THE CULLOWHEE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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by

Suzanne Hill McDowell

Director: Dr. Max R. Williams,
Professor, Department of History

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Abstract

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: A HISTORY OF THE CULLOWHEE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Suzanne Hill McDowell, M.A.

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Director: Dr. Max R. Williams

The Cullowhee United Methodist Church will celebrate its centennial anniversary in 1994. The establishment of the church was preceded by more than 150 years of Methodist development in England and America. Methodism was brought to the American frontier through an efficient organizational structure which utilized circuit systems, itinerant preachers, a dedicated laity, and camp meetings. By the 1840s Methodists represented the largest Protestant body in America.

In the nineteenth century, large numbers of people began to move into western North Carolina as lands were legally opened for settlement. Along with the building of businesses, farms, and homes, early settlers organized schools and churches. Methodist churches were established at the communities of East La Porte, Speedwell, and Webster by the 1830s. As part of a circuit system, these churches were served by itinerant ministers. Speedwell and East La Porte churches eventually served as the parent churches for Cullowhee Methodist, which was founded in 1894 with 35

charter members. Several of these members were also noted as founders of another Cullowhee Valley institution, Western Carolina University, established in 1889.

The history of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church is closely tied to the development of Western Carolina University. The church's first meeting place and all subsequent sanctuaries have been located on university properties. The university community has been heavily represented in the church's membership and leadership. Many local and national events affecting the University have also affected the Church. Church and school continue to share physical facilities, personnel, and resources to the present day.

The Cullowhee church also has a long and successful record of service to the students at Western Carolina University. Many of the church members who worked closely with students during the week continued to concern themselves with the spiritual needs of these young people on weekends. Likewise, many ministers who served the Cullowhee church taught at the University in addition to devoting a major focus of their ministry to college students.

The Cullowhee church membership has been a caring group of people who have reached out to meet community needs throughout its history. Early projects to help the needy have been replaced by more highly organized altruistic endeavors such as the Christmas Store project, the Jackson Village housing project, and the United Christian Ministries

of Jackson County, Inc.

Today, the Cullowhee United Methodist Church continues a fine tradition of service to God and community. With an active membership of over 300, the church is an affirmation of the faith espoused by those early founding members. The Methodists of Cullowhee Valley stand ready to face the challenges of a new century.

The Prelude

Nineteen hundred ninety-four marks the centennial anniversary of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church. Located in the southern mountains of western North Carolina, Cullowhee Methodist Church is today part of the United Methodist Church of America. Many factors contributed to the shape and form of the Cullowhee church. The geographic location, the tenor of the times in which the church was conceived, and the diverse personalities which were involved in its creation impart a distinctive character to the church. In addition to these factors, there exists that elusive, indefinable quality of "spirit." All these factors combined to shape the development of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. It is the purpose of this thesis to provide as complete a history as possible of the founding, growth, and development of the Cullowhee Methodist Church from 1894 to the present day.

As one historian has so aptly stated, "people...in order to understand their customs and institutions must know how the present forms came to be."¹ While the shape and form of the present Cullowhee Methodist Church is foremost a

¹Ora Blackmun, Western North Carolina: Its Mountains And Its People to 1880, Introduction by Cratis Williams, (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1977), xiii.

product of personalities and events in western North Carolina over the past one hundred years, one must also examine the underlying factors which shaped the broader organization of Methodism in America. This will be accomplished by reviewing the impact of places as far distant as England and the contributions of individuals like John Wesley and Francis Asbury, who with countless others, laid the basis for Methodism in America.

When it was first established in 1894, the Cullowhee Methodist Church was part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, an organization formed in 1844 from the national Methodist Episcopal Church. One hundred years before 1844, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had called for the first organized Methodist conference in England. So it can be established that the history of the church in Cullowhee was shaped by more than a century of previous Methodist development.

John Wesley founded Methodism in England in the early 1700s. Dissatisfied with the lack of religious zeal among his fellow Anglican churchmen, Wesley sought "not to establish a new doctrine, or a new church, but to seek after a new life, and to get others to do likewise."² His newfound spiritualism emphasized the love of Christ coupled with freedom of personal choice. Wesley's message, often

²William L. Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina: From 1772 to the Present Time (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1905), 26.

delivered in fields among the common people of England, answered the religious needs of many Englishmen.

By the mid-1700s, Wesley began to send missionaries to America to introduce this new doctrine of free grace and salvation. The efforts of the first struggling evangelists eventually met with great success following the end of the American Revolution. In 1784 the Methodist Episcopal Church was officially established at Lovely Land Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland, with membership reported to be almost 15,000.³

At the 1784 Christmas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, several organizational goals were formulated. The Methodists created a book of law known as the Discipline. The Discipline outlined regulations for the conduct of Methodist ministers and members, and addressed processes and procedures for developing the Methodist organization in America.⁴ The latter process included the concept of a "circuit" plan for carrying the Methodist faith to the frontier. The circuit system called for the assignment of itinerant preachers to a prescribed route or circuit. The major purpose of this plan was to carry the Methodist doctrine to widely scattered populations on the

³William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840, Vol.IV, The Methodists: A Collection of Source Materials (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946; reprint, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1964), 40 (page references are to reprint edition).

⁴Nolan B. Harmon, The Organization of The Methodist Church (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1962), 190.

frontier.

The circuit system worked in the following manner. Areas of the country were divided into circuits. A circuit was composed of numerous classes or societies. Each class or society represented a group of individuals united in Methodist worship and was presided over by lay leaders from within the membership. Societies were regularly visited by circuit riders, the itinerant preachers, on their "rounds" of the circuits. Each circuit was assigned to a district. Districts were combined to form larger groups called district conferences. District conferences held meetings at least annually to plan the evangelical work of their district. The planning group included local and itinerant preachers of the district, lay church representatives, and a presiding elder.⁵

Served by a dedicated itinerant ministry, the circuit system proved to be so successful in America that other Protestant denominations were often challenged to compete with the Methodists for converts. However, the efforts of these denominations were often frustrated as evidenced by the following statement by an evangelical competitor:

I at length became ambitious to find a family whose cabin had not been entered by a Methodist preacher. In several days I travelled from settlement to settlement, on my errand of good, but into every hovel I entered, I learned that the Methodist missionary had been there

⁵Ibid., 143.

before me.⁶

The success of the circuit system was reflected also in the burgeoning Methodist membership which by the late 1700s had grown to almost 66,000.⁷

One of the best known and greatest itinerant preachers was Francis Asbury. He was an outstanding organizer and role model in the successful initiation of the itinerant system. Asbury worked diligently and traveled constantly from the time of his arrival in America in 1771 until his death in 1816. It can be verified from Asbury's journals that he made more than sixty trips through North Carolina alone, trips which were often difficult. One trip through western North Carolina around 1810 was described by Asbury in this way:

Friday our troubles began at the foaming, roaring stream which hid the rocks. At Cataloochee I walked over a log. But O, the mountain--height after height, and five miles over! After crossing other streams, and losing ourselves in the woods, we came in about nine o'clock at night....What an awful day!⁸

In the early nineteenth century, the itinerant preacher and the circuit system were joined by another symbol of Methodist development. The Methodists made extensive use of a frontier phenomenon known as the camp meeting. Camp

⁶Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 19.

⁷Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Methodists, 40.

⁸Francis Asbury, Francis Asbury in North Carolina, Introductory Notes by Grady L. E. Carroll, (Nashville: The Parthenon Press, 1964), 249.

meetings were an outgrowth of two factors: (1) the Great Revival of 1800 and (2) the scattered, isolated settlement patterns which characterized the frontier.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a movement which came to be called the Great Revival had its origins in Kentucky. Essentially, the Great Revival of 1800 was a widespread religious crusade to "save souls from hell."⁹ However, because the settlements were widely scattered along the frontier, the best way to bring religion to large numbers of people was to assemble them in one central location. Because church buildings were either nonexistent or too small to accommodate large groups, "camp meetings" were conducted outdoors over a period of several days.

Typical characteristics of camp meetings included large numbers of people living in tents or camping out in wagons. Daily religious services were offered by several denominational preachers. Services were often the scene of high emotionalism characterized by shouting and various displays of uncontrolled physical movements or "the jerks" among attendees. Since few could resist such an emotional climate, converts were numerous.

The Methodists, perhaps due to the influence of Francis Asbury who strongly supported this evangelical tool, adopted the camp meeting by the early 1800s and refined it as their own. Camp meetings, coupled with the circuit system,

⁹Clement Eaton, "The Ebb of the Great Revival," North Carolina Historical Review, 23 (January 1946): 1.

itinerant preachers, and a dedicated laity, proved to be powerful forces for Methodism in frontier America. By the 1840s the results of the Methodists' strategy was evident. Methodists represented the largest Protestant body in America.¹⁰

Frontier conditions in western North Carolina from the late 1700s to the early 1800s were similar to other areas of undeveloped America. Initially, the western North Carolina region was populated by Native Americans, primarily the Cherokee. Following the American Revolution, white settlers began to push into many areas of the west even though these regions were not yet legally open to white settlement. By the 1820s additional treaty revisions and surveys of the western lands enabled settlers to purchase land and populate far western North Carolina legally.¹¹

Between 1800 and 1840 conditions on the frontier of western North Carolina began to change. As legal restrictions on frontier lands were lifted, people flowed in and settlements grew. Freed from the daily tasks of simple survival and protection of their families, early settlers began to concern themselves with shaping new communities. Along with permanent homes and professions, people desired schools to educate their children and churches for worship.

¹⁰Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Methodists, 46.

¹¹H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, "The Pioneer Experience to 1851," in The History of Jackson County, ed. Max R. Williams (Sylva: The Jackson County Historical Association, 1987), 67-94.

One example of this strong desire for a house of worship was reported by Jesse R. Siler, a prominent early resident of Macon County, North Carolina, who wrote:

In 1829 I formed the Methodist Church....I gave permission for the circuit preachers to preach in a house I had on my land when a small society was raised. Being few in number I thought of my promise to my Maker [and] accordingly set to work to build a church.¹²

Simply but poignantly stated, this account reflects the substance of spirituality among some of the early settlers in western North Carolina.

When Jesse Siler wrote of founding a Methodist Church in Macon County, western North Carolina was a part of the Holston Conference served by the Franklin Circuit. As Methodist membership increased, circuit boundaries were reassigned and often renamed. By 1848 the Franklin Circuit was renamed the Waynesville Circuit.¹³ In 1852 the Waynesville Circuit became the Tuckaseige Circuit. And finally, in 1853, the Tuckaseige became the Webster Circuit.¹⁴

In 1890, at the peak of Methodist growth in the Holston Conference, churches of the piedmont and of the mountains of western North Carolina were removed from

¹²Jesse R. Siler, "Jesse R. Siler Collection Book," circa 1829, [microfilm], unpagged, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill.

¹³Elmer T. Clark, Methodism in Western North Carolina (Nashville: The Parthenon Press, 1966), 35-38.

¹⁴C. H. Clyde, Webster Circuit, M. E. Church, South (Sylva: Journal Publishing Co., 1907), 21.

Holston authority and reformed under the name Western North Carolina Conference. The Western North Carolina Conference included among its far-western counties Haywood, formed in 1808, Macon, formed in 1838, and Jackson County, formed in 1851.¹⁵

The formation of Jackson County in 1851 prompted the movement of families from several surrounding counties to the Cullowhee valley. The earliest recorded family names include Bryson, Watson, Brown, Hooper, and Buchanan.¹⁶ Later they were joined by other neighbors including the Smith, Coward, Cox, Rogers, and Davies families.¹⁷ It soon became apparent that these early settlers were interested in building a community. Along with establishing their farms and businesses, they also began to develop schools and churches. In fact, the organization of schools and churches in the Cullowhee community was so interconnected that it is impossible to write a history of one without relating some of the history of the other.

The first "subscription" school in the Cullowhee community began at the Painter farm in 1820.¹⁸ This school predated the establishment of a local Baptist church by one

¹⁵Clark, 35-38.

¹⁶Blethen and Wood, 78-83.

¹⁷William E. Bird, The History of Western Carolina College: The Progress of an Idea (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 8.

¹⁸Edgar H. Stillwell, "Cullowhee State Normal School, circa 1927," p. 13, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

year. At the time the Cullowhee community was largely composed of Baptists. The first officially organized Baptist church, established in 1821, was named "Unity." Originally located near present-day Webster, the church moved to the Cullowhee community in 1830. At that time it was renamed "Cullowhee Baptist Church." This first log structure "served the double purpose of schoolhouse and church" for the community.¹⁹

Methodists were active in the county as early as 1835. A log school house, located at old "Poverty Hill" at East La Porte, served as one of the first organized Methodist preaching places in the county. In 1853 a new meeting house, called "Long's Chapel," was erected to serve this area. By 1840 two additional Methodist churches had been organized. These included "Love's Chapel," organized by Daniel Pane and located near Webster, and "Speedwell," organized by John McDowell and located in the Speedwell community.²⁰ Speedwell and East La Porte Methodist churches eventually served as the parent churches for the Cullowhee Methodist Church.

Initially Methodists in the Cullowhee area were so few in number that they worshipped in members' homes. As early as 1850, they were joined by a small group of Presbyterians. The Presbyterians joined the Methodists until a Presbyterian minister could be called to serve the Cullowhee community.

¹⁹Bird, 8.

²⁰Stillwell, 13.

However, since this did not happen until 1940, many of the Presbyterians remained Methodists.²¹ As they grew in number, the Methodists shared facilities at the Cullowhee Baptist Church or at St. David's which was a small Episcopal church established in 1879 by Judge D. D. Davies.²²

Thus, the Cullowhee community by the late 1800s was composed of people of different religious denominations who joined together to farm, conduct business, raise families, and build schools and churches. As new improvements such as the railroad and better roads began to open the community to the outside world, other developments occurred in the area of public education.

In the early 1880s Lewis J. Smith, a prominent member of the East La Porte community, moved to Cullowhee. Smith "was not one to live in a community long without a school and (a Methodist) church."²³ After discussion with other concerned families in the community, Smith provided a small one-room structure known as "Liberty School House" for the purpose of educating his own large family as well as other community children. The building also served as one of the first regular meeting houses of the Methodists of the Cullowhee community.

Eventually a more permanent school, the Cullowhee

²¹Clifford R. Lovin, "Religion", in The History of Jackson County, 261.

²²Ibid.

²³JoAnn Smith, By Chance or By Plan (Raleigh: Business Services Unlimited, 1982), 13.

Academy, replaced the Liberty School House. In 1889 Robert Lee Madison was hired as teacher/director of the Cullowhee Academy. Initial enrollment at the school was only eighteen, consisting mostly of children of the founding members. However, over the next several months, enrollment grew rapidly to more than 100 students from the surrounding area. Madison's plans for developing the institution from a primary/secondary subscription school to one of the new teacher training schools coincided with a statewide education initiative. By 1891 a charter from the North Carolina General Assembly established Cullowhee High School as the second state-supported white normal school in North Carolina.²⁴ Nine individuals, who had been instrumental in the institution's founding, were appointed to the first board. They included: Lewis J. Smith, J. David Coward, William C. Norton, and R. Hamilton Brown, all of whom had Methodist affiliations; William Henson, Robert L. Watson, and William Wilson with Baptist affiliations; Daniel D. Davies and Thomas A. Cox who had Episcopalian affiliations.²⁵

The school and the Cullowhee community grew apace. Methodists and Baptists "lived together in Christian

²⁴H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, A Mountain Heritage: The Illustrated History of Western Carolina University (Cullowhee: Western Carolina University, 1989), 15.

²⁵Nannie Smith McGuire, "Early History Part II," Jackson County Journal, 12 March 1959.

fellowship and harmony."²⁶ But a desire grew among several Methodist members to see if they could "find enough Methodist people in this community to form a class and get the Webster preacher to come out once a month and preach for us" even though they did not have a church.²⁷ Several Methodist ladies in the community eventually located approximately 35 people, drawn mostly from the Speedwell and East La Porte churches, who joined the Cullowhee membership. Thus, in the fall of 1894, Cullowhee Methodist Church was organized.

Based on the recollections of one of the early members, Mrs. Ida Rogers Cotter, there were seventeen charter members.²⁸ The members included Lewis J. and Clara A. Smith, Mrs. Rebecca Smith (mother of Lewis J. Smith), Miss Ida J. Smith, Miss Beulah Smith (died in 1893), Mrs. Lena Smith Wallace, Prof. Robert L. Madison, J. David and Lou Coward, Mrs. Anna (Hamilton) Brown, Mrs. Sophia (David F.) Brown, Mrs. Eva Bryson, Mrs. Anne Bryson, Mr. Vance Bryson, Mr. and Mrs. Hardee Bennett, and Miss Mattie Bennett.²⁹

²⁶Nannie Smith McGuire, "Early History, Part I", Jackson County Journal, 5 March 1959.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Because no official church records survive from this period, it is difficult to verify the listing of charter members which follows. It is perhaps more important to recognize that all of the people in the list were to one degree or another involved in the founding of the Cullowhee Methodist Church in 1894.

²⁹Ibid.

Later reports also listed Mr. and Mrs. Hugh D. Bryson.³⁰ First stewards of the church were Lewis J. Smith, J. David Coward, Prof. Robert L. Madison, and Hugh Bryson. The preacher in charge of the Cullowhee church was the Reverend Anthony Wayne Jacobs.³¹

Information about the earliest ministers to serve the Cullowhee Methodist Church is difficult to locate. However, some information on these men can be gleaned from obituaries published in the Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conferences. Fortunately, some details about the two earliest Cullowhee Methodist Church ministers are available.

The Reverend Anthony Wayne Jacobs was the first preacher appointed to serve the newly formed Cullowhee Methodist Church on the Webster Circuit. Jacobs was born in Dandridge, Tennessee, in August 1852, but moved in his youth to Macon County, North Carolina. During his early adult years he was involved in a mercantile business in Dillsboro, North Carolina. By 1888, however, he was admitted "on trial" to the Holston Conference. He served on the Franklin and Hayesville Circuits before coming to the Webster Circuit in 1895. After leaving the Webster Circuit, he served several more years in the ministry before he retired to Macon County in 1910 due to his wife's poor

³⁰Eddie Marie Wike Sutton Duckett, "History of the Cullowhee Methodist Church," in My Mountain Heritage Collection (Raleigh: By the author, 1983), unpagged.

³¹Clyde, 29.

health. He died there in 1932.³²

The Reverend Robert Lee Sprinkle followed the Reverend Jacobs on the Webster Circuit, arriving sometime in 1895 and serving until 1897. Sprinkle was born in Buncombe County, near Leicester, on August 6, 1864. He attended a small Methodist-led school in Leicester and a subscription school in Canton, North Carolina, before going to Weaverville College. He then attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he studied law for approximately five months before turning to the ministry. He joined the Western North Carolina Conference in November 1895. His first appointment was to the Webster Circuit. Sprinkle traveled the circuit by horseback for approximately five months before purchasing a good buggy. In the fall of 1897, he reported that church buildings had been completed at Glenville and Speedwell; that he had preached about 200 times on the charge, witnessed 120 conversions, helped in some Baptist meetings, and visited 260 homes. Later he wrote, "I wish I had time to spare to tell of the pleasure it was to me to be associated with those wonderful mountain people."³³ But eventually the circuit proved to be too difficult for his health, and the Reverend Sprinkle left western North Carolina to serve in the Florida and

³²Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, (Winston-Salem: Centenary Church, 1932), 140.

³³The Reverend Robert Lee Sprinkle, The Story of My Life (San Diego: By the author, 1939), 21.

California conferences.

Other preachers followed, usually appointed to serve one or two-year periods on the Webster Circuit. Many were natives of surrounding western counties. Some worked at part-time occupations; one worked part-time tuning musical instruments.³⁴ All seemed deeply committed to their ministerial profession. Each man in his own way was important to the early life of the Cullowhee Methodist Church.

Over one hundred-fifty years of Methodist history preceded the founding of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Traveling from England to America in the mid-eighteenth century, missionaries sent by John Wesley brought the message of free grace and salvation offered to all who would believe and accept the Methodist doctrine. Carried to the frontier in the early nineteenth century by itinerant preachers and dedicated lay leaders, through circuit systems and camp meetings, the Methodist doctrine came to areas like western North Carolina. Sustained through mid-century by the efforts of a dedicated laity, the Methodists joined others of their kind to form the first established Methodist churches of Jackson County. By 1894, in the Cullowhee Valley, the prelude for the Cullowhee Methodist Church was ended. Now came the time for the larger task of building.

³⁴Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1962, 259.

Call to Worship: 1895-1930

Change and progress were key words as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth century. The American nation experienced the excitement of Ragtime, the first explosion of mass communication through radio, newspapers, and motion pictures, the first automobiles and airplanes, widespread industrialization, the first World War, prohibition, and, as this period ended, a major depression.

Changes were evident in the South as one century merged with the other. Industrialization led to the growth of towns and cities and increased emphasis on social conditions. Most religious denominations formed commissions or committees to direct efforts toward social reform issues. For example, in 1890 the southern Methodists introduced a Standing Committee on Temperance. By 1910 that committee expanded to address other social concerns such as child labor laws, regulation of women's labor, and the improvement of working conditions.³⁵

Western North Carolina was also concerned by events on the national and regional level. Minutes of the Western North Carolina Methodist Conference meetings noted the importance of church support for the temperance movement

³⁵Kenneth K. Bailey, Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), 41.

during this period. The Progressive Farmer emphasized the "importance of the country church as a factor in the development and enrichment of country life."³⁶ A Social Service Conference, held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, in the early 1920s, addressed social concerns of a society undergoing transformation. Many feared that there was not enough of the "old time religion."³⁷

Methodists of western North Carolina searched for ways to counter threats to society. The Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of 1915 recommended the following:

We urge upon the presiding elders and pastors of rural charges that, for the future, wherever practicable, in the location of church buildings, they be placed adjacent to school buildings, and that in the location of parsonages, we join with the school authorities in placing the homes of preacher and teacher alongside church and school buildings. We recognize that these two institutions--the church and the school--should together form the center of community life, and that preacher and teacher should be the natural leaders and moulders of this community life.³⁸

The Methodist people of Cullowhee had already heeded this directive by the early 1900s.

Following the 1894 founding, the Cullowhee Methodist Church continued to grow. Cullowhee Methodist was one of several churches which composed the Webster Circuit. In 1901 the Webster Circuit reported a total of 345 members,

³⁶Jackson County Journal (Sylva), 4 July 1913.

³⁷Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1923, 83.

³⁸Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1915, 40.

including the 35 to 45 members of the Cullowhee church.³⁹ Conditions on the early circuits were at best difficult. The Reverend Robert L. Sprinkle, an early minister on the Webster Circuit, described some of the conditions on his arrival to the Webster Circuit in the late 1890s as follows:

The Cullowhee circuit was a very large one. I had eight appointments where I preached on Sunday. They were East La Port[sic], Johns Creek, Glenville, Double Springs, Cullowhee, Speedwell, Loves Chapel, and Savana[sic]. I had two or three appointments where I preached at night on week days. I preached twice every Sunday in the month. In connection with the preaching I had a regular course of study on which I had to stand an examination at the end of the conference year. An aged lady said to me, "The conference generally sends a young man to this charge and the work is so large he breaks down before his time is out." I thought to myself, this is one man who will not break down. But I did. I had ten or eleven appointments in all. I had a long distance to travel between some of the appointments. It was also in a mountain country. It required a good deal of energy to meet all of those appointments in the winter time when it was raining and snowing.⁴⁰

The ministers who followed Sprinkle faced the same physical and mental challenges. Despite these obstacles, slow but steady growth continued to be the pattern of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Around 1902 it was reported that a Brother E. Myers "held a great meeting from which he received 22 new members" for the Cullowhee Methodist Church.⁴¹ By 1907, when the Reverend C. H. Clyde was appointed to the Webster Circuit, the church reported 57

³⁹Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1901, 54.

⁴⁰Sprinkle, 12.

⁴¹Clyde, 29. *North 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 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2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 2681, 2682, 2683, 2684, 2685, 2686, 2687, 2688, 2689, 2690, 2691, 2692, 2693, 2694, 2695, 2696, 2697, 2698, 2699, 2700, 2701, 2702, 2703, 2704, 2705, 2706, 2707, 2708, 2709, 2710, 2711, 2712, 2713, 2714, 2715, 2716, 2717, 2718, 2719, 2720, 2721, 2722, 2723, 2724, 2725, 2726, 2727, 2728, 2729, 2730, 2731, 2732, 2733, 2734, 2735, 2736, 2737, 2738, 2739, 2740, 2741, 2742, 2743, 2744, 2745, 2746, 2747, 2748, 2749, 2750, 2751, 2752, 2753, 2754, 2755, 2756, 2757, 2758, 2759, 2760, 2761, 2762, 2763, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2767, 2768, 2769, 2770, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2775, 2776, 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781, 2782, 2783, 2784, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2788, 2789, 2790, 2791, 2792, 2793, 2794, 2795, 2796, 2797, 2798, 2799, 2800, 2801, 2802, 2803, 2804, 2805, 2806, 2807, 2808, 2809, 2810, 2811, 2812, 2813, 2814, 2815, 2816, 2817, 2818, 2819, 2820, 2821, 2822, 2823, 2824, 2825, 2826, 2827, 2828, 2829, 2830, 2831, 2832, 2833, 2834, 2835, 2836, 2837, 2838, 2839, 2840, 2841, 2842, 2843, 2844, 2845, 2846, 2847, 2848, 2849, 2850, 2851, 2852, 2853, 2854, 2855, 2856, 2857, 2858, 2859, 2860, 2861, 2862, 2863, 2864, 2865, 2866, 2867, 2868, 2869, 2870, 2871, 2872, 2873, 2874, 2875, 2876, 2877, 2878, 2879, 2880, 2881, 2882, 2883, 2884, 2885, 2886, 2887, 2888, 2889, 2890, 2891, 2892, 2893, 2894, 2895, 2896, 2897, 2898, 2899, 2900, 2901, 2902, 2903, 2904, 2905, 2906, 2907, 2908, 2909, 2910, 2911, 2912, 2913, 2914, 2915, 2916, 2917, 2918, 2919, 2920, 2921, 2922, 2923, 2924, 2925, 2926, 2927, 2928, 2929, 2930, 2931, 2932, 2933, 2934, 2935, 2936, 2937, 2938, 2939, 2940, 2941, 2942, 2943, 2944, 2945, 2946, 2947, 2948, 2949, 2950, 2951, 2952, 2953, 2954, 2955, 2956, 2957, 2958, 2959, 2960, 2961, 2962, 2963, 2964, 2965, 2966, 2967, 2968, 2969, 2970, 2971, 2972, 2973, 2974, 2975, 2976, 2977, 2978, 2979, 2980, 2981, 2982, 2983, 2984, 2985, 2986, 2987, 2988, 2989, 2990, 2991, 2992, 2993, 2994, 2995, 2996, 2997, 2998, 2999, 3000, 3001, 3002, 3003, 3004, 3005, 3006, 3007, 3008, 3009, 3010, 3011, 3012, 3013, 3014, 3015, 3016, 3017, 3018, 3019, 3020, 3021, 3022, 3023, 3024, 3025, 3026, 3027, 3028, 3029, 3030, 3031, 3032, 3033, 3034, 3035, 3036, 3037, 3038, 3039, 3040, 3041, 3042, 3043, 3044, 3045, 3046, 3047, 3048, 3049, 3050, 3051, 3052, 3053, 3054, 3055, 3056, 3057, 3058, 3059, 3060, 3061, 3062, 3063, 3064, 3065, 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3232, 3233, 3234, 3235, 3236, 3237, 3238, 3239, 3240, 3241, 3242, 3243, 3244, 3245, 3246, 3247, 3248, 3249, 3250, 3251, 3252, 3253, 3254, 3255, 3256, 3257, 3258, 3259, 3260, 3261, 3262, 3263, 3264, 3265, 3266, 3267, 3268, 3269, 3270, 3271, 3272, 3273, 3274, 3275, 3276, 3277, 3278, 3279, 3280, 3281, 3282, 3283, 3284, 3285, 3286, 3287, 3288, 3289, 3290, 3291, 3292, 3293, 3294, 3295, 3296, 3297, 3298, 3299, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3308, 3309, 3310, 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320, 3321, 3322, 3323, 3324, 3325, 3326, 3327, 3328, 3329, 3330, 3331, 3332, 3333, 3334, 3335, 3336, 3337, 3338, 3339, 3340, 3341, 3342, 3343, 3344, 3345, 3346, 3347, 3348, 3349, 3350, 3351, 3352, 3353, 3354, 3355, 3356, 3357, 3358, 3359, 3360, 3361, 3362, 3363, 3364, 3365, 3366, 3367, 3368, 3369, 3370, 3371, 3372, 3373, 3374, 3375, 3376, 3377, 3378, 3379, 3380, 3381, 3382, 3383, 3384, 3385, 3386, 3387, 3388, 3389, 3390, 3391, 3392, 3393, 3394, 3395, 3396, 3397, 3398, 3399, 3400, 3401, 3402, 3403, 3404, 3405, 3406, 3407, 3408, 3409, 3410, 3411, 3412, 3413, 3414, 3415, 3416, 3417, 3418, 3419, 3420, 3421, 3422, 3423, 3424, 3425, 3426, 3427, 3428, 3429, 3430, 3431, 3432, 3433, 3434, 3435, 3436, 3437, 3438, 3439, 3440, 3441, 3442, 3443, 3444, 3445, 3446, 3447, 3448, 3449, 3450, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3454, 3455, 3456, 3457, 3458, 3459, 3460, 3461, 3462, 3463, 3464, 3465, 3466, 3467, 3468, 3469, 3470, 3471, 3472, 3473, 3474, 3475, 3476, 3477, 3478, 3479, 3480, 3481, 3482, 3483, 3484, 3485, 3486, 3487, 3488, 3489, 3490, 3491, 3492, 3493, 3494, 3495, 3496, 3497, 3498, 3499, 3500, 3501, 3502, 3503, 3504, 3505, 3506, 3507, 3508, 3509, 3510, 3511, 3512, 3513, 3514, 3515, 3516, 3517, 3518, 3519, 3520, 3521, 3522, 3523, 3524, 3525, 3526, 3527, 3528, 3529, 3530, 3531, 3532, 3533, 3534, 3535, 3536, 3537, 3538, 3539, 3540, 3541, 3542, 3543, 3544, 3545, 3546, 3547, 3548, 3549, 3550, 3551, 3552, 3553, 3554, 3555, 3556, 3557, 3558, 3559, 3560, 3561, 3562, 3563, 3564, 3565, 3566, 3567, 3568, 3569, 3570, 3571, 3572, 3573, 3574, 3575, 3576, 3577, 3578, 3579, 3580, 3581, 3582, 3583, 3584, 3585, 3586, 3587, 3588, 3589, 3590, 3591, 3592, 3593, 3594, 3595, 3596, 3597, 3598, 3599, 3600, 3601, 3602, 3603, 3604, 3605, 3606, 3607, 3608, 3609, 3610, 3611, 3612, 3613, 3614, 3615, 3616, 3617, 3618, 3619, 3620, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625, 3626, 3627, 3628, 3629, 3630, 3631, 3632, 3633, 3634, 3635, 3636, 3637, 3638, 3639, 3640, 3641, 3642, 3643, 3644, 3645, 3646, 3647, 3648, 3649, 3650, 3651, 3652, 3653, 3654, 3655, 3656, 3657, 3658, 3659, 3660, 3661, 3662, 3663, 3664, 3665, 3666, 3667, 3668, 3669, 3670, 3671, 3672, 3673, 3674, 3675, 3676, 3677, 3678, 3679, 3680, 3681, 3682, 3683, 3684, 3685, 3686, 3687, 3688, 3689, 3690, 3691, 3692, 3693, 3694, 3695, 3696, 3697, 3698, 3699, 3700, 3701, 3702, 3703, 3704, 3705, 3706, 3707, 3708, 3709, 3710, 3711, 3712, 3713, 3714, 3715, 3716, 3717, 3718, 3719, 3720, 3721, 3722, 3723, 3724, 3725, 3726, 3727, 3728, 3729, 3730, 3731, 3732, 3733, 3734, 3735, 3736, 3737, 3738, 3739, 3740, 3741, 3742, 3743, 3744, 3745, 3746, 3747, 3748, 3749, 3750, 3751, 3752, 3753, 3754, 3755, 3756, 3757, 3758, 3759, 3760, 3761, 3762, 3763, 3764, 3765, 3766, 3767, 3768, 3769, 3770, 3771, 3772, 3773, 3774, 3775, 3776, 3777, 3778, 3779, 3780, 3781, 3782, 3783, 3784, 3785, 3786, 3787, 3788, 3789, 3790, 3791, 3792, 3793, 3794, 3795, 3796, 3797, 3798, 3799, 3800, 3801, 3802, 3803, 3804, 3805, 3806, 3807, 3808, 3809, 3810, 3811, 3812, 3813, 3814, 3815, 3816, 3817, 3818, 3819, 3820, 3821, 3822, 3823, 3824, 3825, 3826, 3827, 3828, 3829, 3830, 3831, 3832, 3833, 3834, 3835, 3836, 3837, 3838, 3839, 3840, 3841, 3842, 3843, 3844, 3845, 3846, 3847,*

members and had the "enviable reputation of having always paid its assessments in full."⁴² Though early membership was relatively small and would remain so for many years, the Cullowhee Methodists were determined to build their own church.

Immediately after the church was organized, the Methodist women, who had been instrumental in locating and organizing members for the founding, established a "Ladies Aid Society" for the express purpose of starting a building fund for the church. Undaunted by such insignificant details as no established site for the church, these faithful women met once a month to plan and work on projects. Monthly dues of ten cents were assessed for each member. Membership was not strictly confined to the Methodists; other community women with an interest in building a Methodist church were encouraged to join.⁴³ By collecting dues, piecing quilts, cooking suppers, and numerous other tasks, these ladies began to acquire a fund to be used for the building of a church.

During the years before a site was located and purchased, the small congregation met in the original schoolhouse of Cullowhee Academy. The building stood near the site of the present day Madison Memorial garden and

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³McGuire, 12 March 1959, unpagued.

adjacent to the university steam plant.⁴⁴

Unfortunately there are no existing church records for this period of founding and early building of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. However, the story which has been passed through three generations of members tells of the critical role played by Mrs. Ida Rogers Cotter in the building of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Ida's Uncle David Rogers owned much of the land on which the Cullowhee school was located. Ida, a favored niece of Uncle Dave, approached him one day to ask for a donation of a portion of his land for the site of the first Methodist Church in the community. Uncle Dave readily agreed and suggested Ida pick the site. She chose a site centered in the community because she believed it would be easier for other Methodist families to travel there than to a more remote location. The parcel of land she selected is the site of the present day Breese gymnasium on the grounds of Western Carolina University.⁴⁵

A deed was registered in the Jackson County Courthouse on the 7th of May 1907 between David Rogers and the following trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: James M. Cunningham, J. David Coward, H. R. Bryson, Dr. A. A. Nichols, W. W. Brown, W. D. Wike, and R. L. Madison. The deed conveyed a parcel of land "joining the lands of the state and Thos. Davis, Colored...containing one acre more or

⁴⁴William E. Bird, "Some Highlights of the History of Jackson County, 1970," p. 9-10, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁴⁵Ibid., 8-9.

less" for the sum of \$1.00 paid by the trustees.⁴⁶ Soon after the site was purchased, the Ladies Aid Society increased its building fund dues from ten to twenty-five cents per month.

It is not known exactly when construction on the first Cullowhee Methodist Church commenced. However, we may surmise some common events which did occur. A building committee was probably formed which supervised the construction of the building as the materials were assembled. Members of the building committee and of the community probably shared in the labor by donating their time and skills. Additional monies may have been borrowed. The Presiding Elder minutes from the Webster Circuit from 1910 to 1911 reported a "resolution passed to recommend a loan for the Cullowhee church of \$500.00."⁴⁷ Although the resolution does not specify that the loan was for the construction of a church, it is safe to assume that this was indeed the purpose.

By November 1911 an issue of the Jackson County Journal reported:

The Methodist people are building a nice church at Cullowhee, [sic] when it is finished and the Baptist church at Speedwell completed, Cullowhee will then have five good churches, two Baptist, two Methodist and one Episcopal. Then we [sic] the Cullowhee school buildings built by the State which if filled with students would

⁴⁶Jackson County Deed Books, Book 41, 1907, Sylva Courthouse, 494.

⁴⁷"The Presiding Elder's Pocket Minute Book, 1910" [photocopy], unpagged, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham.

give our people a market for quite a lot of the surplus products of the farm and add greatly to the prosperity of our beautiful Cullowhee valley.⁴⁸

By early 1912 the first Cullowhee Methodist Church structure was completed. From photographs which have survived, it can be seen that the building was a simple frame edifice built on an open foundation. The structure contained several windows of clear paned glass. Entrance to the building was gained by climbing several steps to a sheltered area which protected members from inclement weather. On one side of the entrance was the bell tower. The other side contained a window which opened into the church interior. Directly ahead was the entrance to the sanctuary.

The sanctuary was a simple rectangular room which could be partitioned into smaller sections with curtains. The church had two rows of handhewn pews with a center aisle running between them. At the front, choir pews were placed perpendicular to the member pews. Also in the front section stood a podium and some chairs for the visiting preachers and choir leader. During preaching services male and female members were not segregated as had been the practice of an earlier century. Instead members sat where they wished, including teenage members who usually occupied the farthest

⁴⁸"Speedwell," Jackson County Journal, 17 November 1911, unpagued.

reaches of the back pews.⁴⁹ Also at the back of the church (the section nearest the entrance) stood a stove which provided the only source of heat. On November 8, 1912, an article in the Jackson County Journal stated:

We have a nice neat Methodist church...some of us have worked, studied and planed[sic] for years for it and we are still working for it. The next thing we want to do is to paint it....My sons in the west sent me money to buy the the[sic] stove and I ordered it and it is ready for this winter. Next is seating it.⁵⁰

Sunday School classes were an important part of church life in Cullowhee. These classes had been a shared responsibility among people of various denominations in the community in the late 1800s. By the time the Cullowhee Methodist Church was built, however, individual churches held their own Sunday School classes. Children twelve years of age were often responsible for teaching the lessons to the younger ones. Sunday School classes met in partitioned off sections of the church, and the membership then recombined for preaching services. The church bell rang a different number of times to signal the beginning of Sunday School and preaching services. Childhood memories of a Sunday morning in Cullowhee were described thusly: "Every Sunday morning, I guess around 11:00 o'clock, we'd hear the Methodist bell and the Baptist bell and they sounded so

⁴⁹Dr. Charles Bird, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 14 March 1990, and Mrs. Hannah Lou Rowson of Cullowhee, interview by author, 30 August 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

⁵⁰"Cullowhee," Jackson County Journal, 8 November 1912, 4.

pretty ringing together because they were close enough that you could hear it all over Cullowhee."⁵¹ The church bell also announced the death of a member of the community by tolling the age of the deceased.⁵²

All members took pride in the newly constructed building and cared lovingly for it. By informal arrangement, various members of the church served as caretakers of the building and property.

As part of the Webster Circuit, Cullowhee Methodist Church shared its itinerant preacher with neighboring Methodist churches. A 1907 schedule listed preaching appointments at Cullowhee on the first Sunday at 7:30 p.m., second Sunday at 3:00 p.m., and fourth Sunday at 7:30 p.m. Church conferences were held in Cullowhee the second Sunday of January, April, July, and October. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was scheduled on the second Sunday of February, May, August, and November.⁵³ The Cullowhee Methodist Church continued to be part of the Webster Circuit until 1923 when the Cullowhee Circuit was established.⁵⁴

In 1912, the same year the Cullowhee membership built their church, Logan Berge Abernethy was assigned to the Webster Circuit. Abernethy had two great gifts in life:

⁵¹Rowlson interview.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Clyde, 3-5.

⁵⁴Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1922, 89 and 104; 1923, 37.

one for teaching and one for the ministry. Born in 1865, he first taught at Rutherford College. He then joined the Western North Carolina Conference in 1900 and served as pastor on the Weaverville Circuit until he became President of Weaverville College. He stayed at this job for several years before coming to Cullowhee. For four years he taught mathematics at the Cullowhee Normal and Industrial School. He also served as minister to the Cullowhee Methodist Church from 1912 to 1914.

The story is told of the time in 1912 when the college needed to expand to provide rooms for classes and offices. The faculty decided it was time to build an administration/classroom building but lacked the necessary funds. The Reverend Abernethy, Professor A. C. Reynolds, then President of Cullowhee Normal and Industrial School, and several other community people gave their personal notes and borrowed money to begin construction with the hope that the State might one day repay them. Abernethy, who had previous experience in building, was able to plan and direct the construction of "Joyner" building while continuing to teach and preach. In later years the Reverend Abernethy served on several important boards for the Western North Carolina Conference. While in these leadership roles, he was often instrumental in securing funds for the Methodist Church at Cullowhee.⁵⁵ Abernethy provides another example

⁵⁵Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1951, 119 and 201.

of those who served both church and school in the Cullowhee Valley.

In 1923 Aaron Watson Lynch, a graduate of the Citadel at Charleston, South Carolina, came to serve the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Prior to his arrival in Cullowhee, he taught for a short time at Waynesville High School. At the time he arrived in Cullowhee in the early 1920s, there was an increased effort on the part of western North Carolina Methodists to encourage student participation in church life. The Minutes of the Western North Carolina Conferences reflected a growing concern about the spirituality of Methodist youth during the chaotic 1920s. In 1925 an article in the Cullowhee school paper encouraged students to attend the Epworth League meetings held each Sunday night at the Cullowhee Methodist Church with this admonition, "It is the purpose of these meetings to give training and help in the development of the spiritual or deeper side of one's nature."⁵⁶ The Baptist Church also encouraged students to participate in the Baptist Young People's Union.

Hiram T. Hunter, then newly appointed President of Cullowhee Normal and Industrial School, was also concerned about the spirituality of students. In correspondence to State Superintendent Arch Turner Allen in 1927, Hunter told Allen that the school wished to inaugurate courses in Bible or in some phase of religious education to be taught by local pastors. Such courses were to be offered under the

⁵⁶The Cullowhee Yodel (Cullowhee), February 1925.

auspices of denominational boards rather than the Normal School board. Hunter wrote, "The pastors of the local Methodist and Baptist churches have agreed to cooperate. Fortunately they are both college men with specific theological training, and with experience as teachers as well."⁵⁷ However, there is no clear evidence from school records that the Reverend Lynch officially taught at the school during his tenure at Cullowhee Methodist Church.⁵⁸

One of the most significant changes which transpired during Lynch's years of service (1923 to 1927) was the establishment of Cullowhee as a separate preaching station. In 1918 the Webster Circuit was renamed the Webster/Cullowhee Circuit. Three years later another change created the Cullowhee Circuit which included the churches at Speedwell, East La Porte, John's Creek, and Cullowhee. By 1923 East La Porte and John's Creek were once again placed on the Webster Circuit, leaving only Speedwell Methodist Church and the church at Cullowhee on the Cullowhee Circuit. One hundred fifty-three members were reported on the Cullowhee Circuit in 1923.⁵⁹ However, the 1924 Minutes reported 86 members; a change which signifies the first

⁵⁷Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, to State School Superintendent A. T. Allen, Raleigh, 14 February 1927, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁵⁸Bird, History of Western Carolina College, 274-284.

⁵⁹Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1918, 41; 1921, 91; 1923, 37 and 124.

official reporting of only the Cullowhee "station."⁶⁰

By 1927 Cullowhee Station reported a membership of 92, one Sunday School, one church building valued at \$8,000, and the first report of a parsonage, valued at \$5,000.⁶¹ Earlier pastors to the Cullowhee Methodist Church had to rent homes in the vicinity, but by 1927 the church membership provided a parsonage for their pastors. No information is available on the building of this structure. From photographs of this period which survive, it can be seen that the simple frame structure was located above the church on the hill nearest to Old Moore dormitory. The first occupant was likely the Reverend J. S. Folger who served the Cullowhee Methodist Church from 1927 to 1928.

The Methodist Church was not the only growing institution in the Cullowhee valley. In 1927 Cullowhee State Normal School graduated its last high school senior class. President H. T. Hunter then pursued a change of direction for the institution from a high school/college-level normal school to a four-year bachelor's degree-granting institution. In 1929 the school received a revised charter and was renamed Western Carolina Teachers College.⁶²

Cordial relations continued to be the norm between

⁶⁰Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1924, 122 and 134.

⁶¹Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1927, 100.

⁶²Blethen and Wood, A Mountain Heritage, 75-82.

school and churches during this period. Numerous articles in the school newspaper encouraged students to become a part of the community and churches. One such article reported,

Mr. Folger, the pastor, made a very interesting talk on behalf of the church in which he welcomed us to the church service. Mr. Bird, superintendent of the Sunday School, made a short talk on which he gave us a hearty welcome to the Sunday School. He made us feel that each of us has a part in making the Sunday School at Cullowhee what it should be.⁶³

From the turbulent beginnings of the twentieth century, the Cullowhee Methodist Church had not only survived but had grown. By early 1930, the church reported a steadily growing membership. Enrollment at Western Carolina Teachers College was also increasing. The church had located and developed a building site. With community support the members had built their first church and first parsonage. Served by an educated ministry, they continued to draw upon their own dedicated laity. The coming years looked promising.

⁶³The Cullowhee Yodel, (Cullowhee), 15 November 1928.

The Service of Giving: 1930-1961

The three decades between 1930 and 1961 were years of significant change for the Cullowhee Methodist Church. The development of the church during this period in many ways reflected dramatic changes at Western Carolina Teachers College. Both institutions were affected by events which occurred on the national and international scenes.

The impact of the Great Depression continued to affect national and international economies into the 1930s. It seemed that no area escaped the ravages of the depression, including western North Carolina. Many people still recall the early and mid-1930s as the most difficult years of their lives. Images, sharp in detail, of no jobs, no money, and a scarcity of all material goods mark this period. However, by the late 1930s, the national economy was showing signs of improvement primarily through a series of "recovery" programs initiated by a Democratic administration.

American preparation for World War II in the early 1940s gave the recovering economy a final boost toward long-term stabilization. World War II also intensified American nationalism and patriotism, giving rise to a new American self-concept as international "watchdog."

As World War II ended, the GI bill brought unprecedented numbers of returning soldiers to college campuses. Small college towns like Cullowhee were suddenly confronted with a new challenge: a more mature, larger, independent student body, with discretionary funds at its disposal, that demanded greater personal freedom on the college campuses.

The widespread development of television in the 1950s had a profound influence on American households. The black and white screens captivated American audiences even with their limited fare of western and comedic shows. Gradually, however, as programming improved, highlights included international news of the Korean War and the Cold War, the senate hearings of the McCarthy era, and presidential elections.

At the close of the 1950s, the nation was in an unusually complacent state. As large numbers of Americans returned to the safety and comfort of churches, the Communist threat in Korea was stalemated. A Republican "war hero" was elected president after two decades of Democratic party rule. The nation's economy was once more thriving, spurred by the lowest inflation rate since the war. However, a younger, better educated, and more liberal group was coming of age. In 1960 this group helped elect the youngest and first Catholic president in our history and ushered in the beginnings of the civil rights movement.

The dramatic changes which occurred during this

period, both internationally and nationally, produced significant changes in western North Carolina. Following the "Hard Times" of the depression, the region was physically altered through a series of federally funded programs like TVA, the opening of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the WPA and CCC work programs.

Special changes were also evident in the Cullowhee Valley. Locally this period saw the greatly needed and long awaited improvement of roads and highways into the area. Highway 107, the primary highway from Sylva to Cullowhee, was paved from Sylva to the South Carolina line in the late 1930s.⁶⁴ Later projects widened and straightened other primary highways.

Significant growth occurred at Western Carolina Teachers College. The 1930s enrollment of approximately 300 students swelled to over 1,200 by the 1960s. The faculty grew also and became more diversified in their academic backgrounds.⁶⁵ By 1953 the school had expanded, improved its physical facilities, and altered its curriculum from that of a teachers college to that of a multi-purpose state college.⁶⁶ In 1957 Western Carolina College admitted its first black student.⁶⁷

⁶⁴John L. Bell, "Economic Developments", in The History of Jackson County, 197-198.

⁶⁵Blethen and Wood, A Mountain Heritage, 156.

⁶⁶Ibid., 134.

⁶⁷Ibid., 138.

The growth of the school directly affected the congregation of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. By the mid-1920s, President Hiram T. Hunter and other members of the Board of Trustees realized that the school needed additional property for expansion. In 1924 the school had purchased the 60-acre "Uncle" David Rogers "Town House" farm, and discussions had begun between the community's black citizens and the school to acquire the church property and cemetery of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.⁶⁸ The church property, located adjacent to Davies Hall, was acquired in January 1929.⁶⁹ In July 1929 President Hunter's correspondence mentioned the idea that "some of us are working upon the idear[sic] of getting a modern building for the Methodist Church. A special appeal will be made to the officials of the Duke Foundation having charge of the special fund for adding rural churches."⁷⁰ At the same time, the Cullowhee Baptist Church was in the process of constructing a \$30,000 building adjacent to the site of its older structure.⁷¹

By January 1934 Western Carolina Teachers College officials realized that they badly needed a new gymnasium to replace the one in the "Old Madison" building. Old Madison,

⁶⁸Ibid., 70-74.

⁶⁹Bird, The History of Western Carolina College, 154.

⁷⁰Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, to Don Elias, Asheville, 27 July 1929, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷¹Ibid.

built in 1904, had been declared a fire hazard.⁷² The continuing legacy of the depression left no state funds to build or to purchase land for a new gym or site.⁷³ Negotiations began with some of the members of the Cullowhee Methodist Church concerning the possibility of a property "swap." At the same time President Hunter pursued the possibility of federal funds for the construction of the new gym.⁷⁴ Board of Trustees minutes of September 1935 indicate that church officials "had proposed to sell to the College their present church building with its site for the sum of five thousand dollars...provided the College would donate a suitable site on the north or west side of highway 106 for a new building."⁷⁵ Trustee H. E. Buchanan offered the resolution which authorized the purchase of the church, lot and parsonage for \$5,000 and the transfer of property on the west side of Highway 106 (now University Drive) to church officials.⁷⁶

In October 1935 the Building Committee of the Cullowhee Methodist Parsonage submitted an additional proposition to

⁷²Thomas L. Johnson, Asheville, to Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, 2 January 1934, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Frank L. Dunlop, Raleigh, to Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, 14 February 1934, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷⁵Western Carolina College Board of Trustee minutes, 4 September 1935, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷⁶Ibid.

the College Board of Trustees offering to buy the frame church building for \$200 and agreeing to assume full responsibility for tearing it down and moving it away within 30 days of official notification of acceptance of this proposition.⁷⁷

Hunter at once began to correspond with members of the Board of Trustees to secure their decision on the proposal. On December 2, 1935, Hunter indicated that the "Methodist Church Board is laying the foundation for their parsonage and will have to buy the church soon if they use the material in their new parsonage."⁷⁸ Finally, after obtaining approval from most of the members of the Board of Trustees, Hunter received official notice from A. S. Brower, Director of the Division of Purchase and Contract of the State of North Carolina, "to proceed with the sale of this building."⁷⁹ Hunter subsequently notified Ralph C. Sutton and William E. Bird on December 31, 1935, of the acceptance of their proposal.⁸⁰

A May 1936 memorandum reported, "By special

⁷⁷W. E. Bird and R. C. Sutton, Cullowhee, to Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, 21 October 1935, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷⁸Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, to W. E. Breese, Asheville, 2 December 1935, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁷⁹A. S. Brower, Raleigh, to Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, 24 December 1935, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁸⁰Hiram T. Hunter, Cullowhee, to Messrs. Sutton and Bird, Cullowhee, 31 December 1935, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

arrangements with Budget Office, this property was purchased for \$5,000, plus certain transfer expenses....A deed was made to the Church for a new site west of the campus. The Church has erected a new brick bungalow for a parsonage."⁸¹

The Reverend Cecil G. Hefner was the first to occupy the new parsonage. He and his family spent several months in the old parsonage on campus before moving into the new parsonage which had been constructed by using some of the materials from the original 1912 church structure. Noting that he had been sent to Cullowhee specifically to build a church and parsonage, Hefner settled into the new parsonage and went about the second task of coordinating the building of a new church.⁸²

The 1935 report of the Board of Missions of the Western North Carolina Conference specified "that a church building enterprise be undertaken at Cullowhee."⁸³ A committee including a former Cullowhee minister, the Reverend Logan B. Abernethy, was "to cooperate with the local congregation in planning the work."⁸⁴ The Board of Missions of the Western North Carolina Conference donated \$5,000 to supplement the

⁸¹Western Carolina Teachers College Board of Trustees Memoranda for Annual Meeting, Cullowhee, 23 May 1936, Special Collections, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee.

⁸²The Reverend Cecil G. Hefner, Winston-Salem, to Joan Greene, Cullowhee, 8 December 1986 and 4 February 1987, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

⁸³Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1935, 53.

⁸⁴Ibid.

\$5,000 received from the sale of the original property to the college.⁸⁵ The remaining funds needed for the project had to be raised by the local congregation, which numbered 75 members, and through special donations from across the Conference.⁸⁶ Additional monies were needed to build the church which was constructed for a total cost of \$20,000.⁸⁷ The construction of the building in the shadow of the depression required remarkable self-sacrifice and devotion by the small congregation and pastor, but the community proved equal to the task.

The brick church was constructed in a record 90-day period from June 1 to September 1, 1936.⁸⁸ H. M. King, architect for the Western North Carolina Conference Board of Missions and Church Extension, reportedly served as architect for the Cullowhee project.⁸⁹ The two-story structure contained a sanctuary and seven other rooms, including a kitchen. Bricks were laid for \$5.00 per thousand, and finishing carpenters were paid \$.40 per hour. The local building committee was composed of the Reverend Cecil G. Hefner, William E. Bird(Chairman), Ralph C. Sutton

⁸⁵Hefner to Greene, 8 December 1986.

⁸⁶Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1935, 106.

⁸⁷"Methodists At Cullowhee Will Dedicate Church," Jackson County Journal, 19 August 1937, 1.

⁸⁸Hefner to Greene, 4 February 1987.

⁸⁹Duckett, "History of the Cullowhee Methodist Church," unpagd.

(Treasurer), Hiram T. Hunter, S. W. Enloe, David H. Brown, Mrs. Hattie (Frank H.) Brown (Sr.), and Mrs L. A. Ammon.⁹⁰

It was reported that Miss Catherine Neal, an art instructor at Western Carolina College, planned much of the interior of the sanctuary, including the Gothic style arches and lighting.⁹¹ The sanctuary entrance faced Highway 107. Inside the entrance were two small rooms on either side which were used as dressing rooms for weddings. The remainder of the first floor area comprised the sanctuary. One resident recalled that the church pews in the new building were smoother than those in the older frame structure.⁹² The gradual addition of stained glass memorial windows was a major improvement. Donated stained glass windows honored the following: Eva S. Bryson, Martha Ann Richards, Mollie Fisher, Lena Smith Wallace, Will and Sally Norton, Lewis J. and Clara Smith, William and Melvina Keller, Robert L. Madison, William Coward, Hamilton and Anna Brown, Ruth Wike Cannon, Uncle David Rogers, Henry C. Bryson, Virginia Ann Cobb, David and Lou Coward, John and Ida Cotter, and William W. Brown.⁹³ The newly completed church was dedicated by the Bishop Paul B. Kern in August

⁹⁰Hefner to Greene, 8 December 1986.

⁹¹Duckett, "History of the Cullowhee Methodist Church," unpagged.

⁹²Rowlson interview.

⁹³Hannah Lou Rowlson, "Memorial Chapel, July 1990," unpagged, Cullowhee United Methodist Church Library, Cullowhee.

22, 1937.⁹⁴

During Hefner's pastorate, church activities were varied. They included a strong Boy Scout program, youth group activities, a Sunday School class taught by Dean W. E. Bird, and a highly successful Vacation Bible School which once again combined the children of the Methodist and Baptist churches. Revivals were held during summer months at both the Baptist and Methodist churches in Cullowhee. Each shared the other's facilities and services. Young people often attended youth activities at both churches.⁹⁵

The membership of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, established in the 1890s, occasionally joined activities held at the Cullowhee Methodist Church. From the viewpoint of one white resident, racial lines were often crossed when it came to religious matters. Mr. Will Rogers, a well-known and respected black member of the community, occasionally taught Sunday School at the Cullowhee Methodist Church and participated in Sunday School workshops at the Cullowhee Baptist Church.⁹⁶ Many members recall a number of joint religious services held with the black congregation.⁹⁷

⁹⁴Jackson County Journal, 19 August 1937.

⁹⁵Bird and Rowlson interview.

⁹⁶Rowlson interview.

⁹⁷Dr. Gerald Eller of Whittier, interview by author, 2 April 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

The Women's Society of Christian Service, formerly the Ladies Aid Society, continued its activities in the church, holding suppers to earn funds to pay for building improvements. This group provided furnishings for the parsonage, church kitchen, and dining room. In addition, they equipped and furnished the social room and made numerous contributions to charities both local and national. Famous meals were prepared and served by these women to different community organizations such as the Lions Club.⁹⁸ As the founding group of ladies grew older, another group of equally dedicated women continued their work. They included Mrs. Annie Battle, Mrs. Myrtle Bird, Mrs. Grace Brown, Mrs. Hattie Brown, and others.⁹⁹

In addition to his church-related responsibilities, Hefner also taught religious education at the college and received his utilities free for this service.¹⁰⁰ Upon his departure the Reverend Hefner addressed a note to the students at Western Carolina Teachers College indicating that his experience at Cullowhee had been "enjoyable and enriching," and that his association with the student body

⁹⁸Grace Hall Brown, "History of the Cullowhee Woman's Missionary Society, 1964," unpagged, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

⁹⁹Elsie Brown of Cullowhee, interview by author, 2 February 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

¹⁰⁰Bird, History of Western Carolina College, 279 and Hefner to Greene, 8 December 1986.

left him "with unshakable faith in the future."¹⁰¹

The year 1939 was an eventful one. The reunification of the three Methodist bodies, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Protestant Church to form The Methodist Church occurred during that year. Along with this change, the Cullowhee Methodist Church experienced a change in ministers. The Reverend Cecil G. Hefner, who had overseen the building of the new church and parsonage, left to go to Norwood, North Carolina, and the Reverend Walter C. Lanier was assigned to the Cullowhee Methodist Church.

The Reverend Lanier served for two years, and he was followed by the Reverend McMurry S. Richey in 1941. Cullowhee Methodist Church membership was 117 when Richey arrived.¹⁰² Richey, who later earned the Ph.D. degree in mathematics from Duke University, continued an earlier Methodist ministerial tradition in Cullowhee by teaching mathematics and a Bible survey course at the college while his wife, Erica, taught home economics.¹⁰³ When the Richey's left the area in 1945 to serve a church in Concord, North Carolina, the Cullowhee Methodist Church membership

¹⁰¹The Western Carolinian, 25 November 1939.

¹⁰²Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1941, 202.

¹⁰³Bird, The History of Western Carolina College, 282 and Cullowhee Methodist Church Ministerial Survey, February 1990, Cullowhee Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

had grown to 148 members.¹⁰⁴

The advent of World War II severely reduced enrollment at the college. The church also felt the war's impact as members and students left for service. The Reverend Richey was asked to serve as Acting Head of the Department of Mathematics at the college due to the shortage of faculty. Richey's ministry to church families was also affected in unusual ways. As he recalled "shortages of gas made pastoral visiting to remote villages an opportunity(!) for much walking."¹⁰⁵

The Reverend R. Tom Houts, Jr., who served the Cullowhee church from 1945 to 1951, remembered that the enrollment at the college rebounded rapidly at war's end. However, the faculty remained small, leading Houts to help the college by teaching music theory and an introductory music course to college freshmen.¹⁰⁶

During the Reverend Houts tenure, there were numerous improvements to the parsonage and church. Improvements on the parsonage were extensive, including wallpapering the house, upgrading the heating system, remodeling the kitchen,

¹⁰⁴Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1945, 192.

¹⁰⁵Cullowhee Methodist Church Ministerial Survey, February 1990, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁰⁶The Reverend R. T. Houts, Jr., Asheville, to Joan Greene, Cullowhee, 5 December 1986, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

and painting the structure.¹⁰⁷ The Women's Society of Christian Service raised money for landscaping the parsonage, an improvement which was completed by early 1950.¹⁰⁸ Improvements to the church included the remodeling of the chancel and choir areas and the purchase of a new organ.¹⁰⁹

Several church programs were gaining new life. The church Sunday School initiated new classes for beginners and young marrieds. A Vacation Bible School daily average attendance of thirty showed a continuing strong trend. In fact, the only reported slump in church attendance occurred in the summer of 1948 during the polio epidemic.¹¹⁰

Over a period of several years, a relationship had been cultivated between the students attending Western Carolina College and the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Several people connected with both the college and the congregation promoted student participation in the church. These individuals included Miss Anne Hammond, Mrs. Mabel Crum, and Professors W. E. Bird and George Tracy.¹¹¹ All were on the faculty of Western Carolina Teachers College as well as

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Mrs. Frank H. Brown, Sr., Report for Women's Society of Christian Service, circa 1948; and Report of Pastor, 11 September 1949, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁰⁹Houts to Greene, 5 December 1986.

¹¹⁰Report of Pastor, 22 August 1948, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹¹¹Eller interview.

active church members. These dedicated and caring teachers not only taught their students during the weekdays, but they also sought to provide social and religious activities on weekends. Activities were often sponsored by the Epworth League, a Methodist youth group. However, the newly founded Wesley Foundation was rapidly replacing the Epworth League on college campuses.

Nationwide, support for the Wesley Foundation struggled for many years due to disagreements centered on the relative merits of meeting the needs of students at church-sponsored colleges versus those attending state-supported institutions. Eventually the sheer numbers of students at state-supported colleges and universities convinced church authorities that secular institutions must be served also.¹¹²

The first incorporated Wesley Foundation in America was established in 1913 by James C. Baker at Trinity Church, at the University of Illinois.¹¹³ The stated goals of the Wesley Foundation "were to provide for the worship, religious education, leadership development for the church, and recruitment of Christian vocations, as well as to

¹¹²James C. Baker, The First Wesley Foundation: An Adventure in Christian Higher Education (The General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1960), 9.

¹¹³Donald G. Shockley, Campus Ministry: The Church Beyond Itself, (Louisville: The Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 34.

provide 'a home away from home.'"¹¹⁴ The foundation pattern developed by the Reverend Baker became the "blueprint" for the establishment of Methodist and other denominational campus ministries.

By the 1920s a nationwide conviction had evolved that "... 'the great home mission field of the church' lay in the state university."¹¹⁵ North Carolina Methodists agreed with this position. The 1923 Conference on Religious Education concluded that "there should be hearty, effective co-operation between the denominational and State agencies,...with the one great purpose that there shall be universal moral and religious training throughout the United States...."¹¹⁶ The rhetoric was followed two years later with the first significant financial support to a state institution. An increase was recommended and approved in the appropriation to the "church at Chapel Hill" of an additional "\$300 for a special worker."¹¹⁷

By the early 1940s appropriations were increased to include a Wesley Foundation at Fairmont Church in Raleigh for North Carolina State College. However, it was not until the late 1940s that Wesley Foundation work extended to other

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Clarence P. Shedd, The Church Follows Its Students (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 30.

¹¹⁶Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1923, 52.

¹¹⁷Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1925, 69.

state institutions such as Western Carolina College. The Cullowhee Methodist Church student program received its first appropriation of \$50.00 from the Wesley Foundation Commission of the Western North Carolina Conference in 1947.¹¹⁸ Although the amount was small, this gesture reflected a new commitment to the Methodist Student Movement at smaller state-supported colleges in North Carolina. This financial support of the Cullowhee church to help build a student organization was one of several precedent-setting examples of a statewide change in church policy.

Development of the college student program continued during the early 1950s when the Reverend James A. Allen served the Cullowhee Methodist Church. Allen devoted much personal time to cultivating a close relationship with Western Carolina College students.¹¹⁹ However, it was not until 1953, that the Wesley Foundation program began to experience significant growth. Two important events occurred during that year.

First came a Western North Carolina Conference announcement designating Cullowhee Methodist Church as a "Conference-Initiated Special" mission project for the next quadrennium. The announcement stated:

Cullowhee is a college community, the home of Western Carolina Teachers College, which had a 25% increase in enrollment last year and has just completed facilities for 1,000 students, an enrollment 50% larger

¹¹⁸Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1947, 164.

¹¹⁹Ministerial Survey.

than that of last year. Since eighty percent of the graduates of the College become teachers in our public schools, the Cullowhee Methodist Church has the opportunity and responsibility to train and minister to future leaders in communities all over the western part of North Carolina. This Special is for an educational building to give adequate space for the Church School, especially for the classes for college students, and for the work of the Wesley Foundation. This is a \$25,000 Conference-Initiated Special.¹²⁰

The second event was the appointment of the Reverend Milford and Mrs. Martha Thumm to the Cullowhee Methodist Church ministry. The Thumm family moved from the Big Spring Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, during the summer of 1953. The dramatic contrast of moving from the "big city" atmosphere of Charlotte to the Cullowhee Valley reinforced the Thumms's initial impression that they had been sent to the Methodist version of "Siberia."¹²¹

The Reverend Milford Thumm's spirited 'doer' philosophy and Martha Thumm's great interest in and devotion to college students produced a period of phenomenal growth and activity for the Cullowhee Methodist Church student group. The energetic efforts of the Thumms, coupled with the promise of increased financial support from the Western North Carolina Conference, led to the remarkable development of the Wesley Foundation at Cullowhee Methodist Church.

Several noticeable changes began to take place around

¹²⁰Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1953, 133.

¹²¹The Reverend and Mrs. Milford Thumm of Durham, former minister to Cullowhee Methodist Church and former co-directors of the Wesley Foundation, interview by author, 9 March 1990, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

the Church and the Methodist parsonage. A core group of students, who attended Sunday School class, began to grow. These students were encouraged to meet on Sunday evenings in the church basement for "Fellowship, Supper, and worship mingled together."¹²² The openness and interest of the Thumms was also evident in a letter addressed to "Methodist Students and those of Methodist Preference."¹²³ The letter stated that "Martha and I...want you to know that we are personally interested in you and your happiness while here at school, and through the Wesley Foundation are ready to extend any help that we can give."¹²⁴

The Wesley Foundation continued its growth as annual Conference appropriations increased from \$50.00 to \$250.00.¹²⁵ Activities were so effectively organized that by 1955 a small "wallet" brochure, advertising the Wesley Foundation Methodist Student Center as a "Home away from Home," was widely circulated among the student body. The Cullowhee Methodist Church also appointed a Wesley Foundation Board composed of interested members of the

¹²²Milford V. Thumm, Cullowhee, to "Methodist Students," Cullowhee, 22 September 1954, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1954, 190.

congregation.¹²⁶ The combination of increased funding, greater administrative guidance, and growing interest and participation by several church leaders led to the accreditation of the Wesley Foundation program by the Methodist Student Movement in 1956.

In spite of the success of the Wesley Foundation program, frustration had been building for the congregation and, personally, for the Thumms, as they tried to address the needs of both the local church congregation and the student organization in physically inadequate surroundings. The church sanctuary was overcrowded. Most of the socializing activities of the Wesley Foundation were held in the basement of the church or at the parsonage. The Sunday morning Bible study class for college students was taught wherever a vacant area could be found.¹²⁷ Even though the 1953 Western North Carolina Conference had designated the Cullowhee Methodist Church as a special mission project, additional funding was needed for a combined educational wing and enlarged sanctuary. The new wing was planned to house the church Sunday School classes on the upper floor and the Wesley Foundation on the bottom floor.

Actual pledges and fund-raising activities for the addition began in earnest around 1956 after some preliminary plans, submitted by the architectural firm of Gudger, Baber

¹²⁶Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1955, 181. See for a full listing of Wesley Foundation Board members at Western Carolina College.

¹²⁷Bird interview.

and Wood of Asheville, North Carolina, were approved.¹²⁸

The cost of the proposed addition at Cullowhee Methodist was estimated to be \$146,000.¹²⁹ Three years of very active solicitation of funds from many sources culminated in May 1959, when the Reverend Thumm received official notice "to start your building immediately."¹³⁰

The largest appropriation for the Wesley Foundation, \$61,000, came from the Inter-Conference Commission on Student Religious Work.¹³¹ Additional monies were raised locally (\$60,000), and from the Duke Endowment (\$8,000), as well as from several different mission boards (\$11,000).¹³²

Church bulletins from 1960 to 1961 intermittently displayed an architecturally rendered sketch of the addition with the word "imminent" in the right-hand corner.

"Imminent" disappeared from the bulletin on May 28, 1961, and was replaced with a black and white photograph of the newly completed educational wing. The official dedication

¹²⁸Cullowhee Methodist Church Bulletins, 26 September 1954 to 30 September 1956 (Bound bulletins on loan from the Reverend Milford Thumm to author).

¹²⁹Cullowhee Methodist Church "Report" filed to The Duke Endowment Rural Church Section, 11 January 1965, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹³⁰C. P. Morris, Raleigh, to the Reverend Milford V. Thumm, Cullowhee, 7 May 1959, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹³¹C. P. Morris, Raleigh, to Mr. Ralph Sutton, Cullowhee, 8 April 1960, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹³²"Facts and Figures on the Building Program Status Report, 28 February 1960," Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

of the Wesley Foundation and educational wing was held October 8, 1961.¹³³

The new Wesley Foundation space included both lounge and recreation areas, a small library, a seminar room, an office for the Campus Minister, and a small meditation chapel.¹³⁴ Actual furnishings for the Wesley Foundation were chosen to lend a "homey" flavor to the surroundings. Included in the furnishings, specifically for the fireplace area, were a set of hand-forged andirons and a stylized Christian fish symbol for the wall above the fireplace. Both articles were made by a local craftsman from Franklin, North Carolina.¹³⁵ Additional monies were received for the purchase of library materials from Miss Anne Hammond, the same Miss Hammond who had, in the early years, helped build the student program at the church.¹³⁶ Also, the new wing was to be dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Madeline Reid, first wife of President Paul A. Reid. She was to be honored for her religious work among students. However, the actual

¹³³Cullowhee Methodist Church Bulletin, 8 October 1961, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹³⁴Robert L. Wilson and Robert A. Davis, "The Cullowhee United Methodist Church and The Methodist Church's Ministry at Western Carolina University, 1971" (Durham: J. M. Ormond Center For Research, Planning, And Development, The Divinity School, Duke University, 1971), 6-7, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹³⁵Mr. Charles Stewart of Sylva, former Wesley Foundation Board member and member of Cullowhee Methodist Church, interview by author, 30 March 1990, Sylva, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

¹³⁶Eller interview.

dedication ceremony never took place for unknown reasons.¹³⁷

Along with the newly completed classroom space on the upper floor, improvements in the sanctuary area included the addition of a three-paneled chancel stained glass window donated by the Women's Society of Christian Service. This organization gave the window in honor of Mrs. Hattie (Frank H.) Brown, Sr., who served as that group's president for a period of twenty-two years. Four other memorial windows were also added at this time.¹³⁸ A highly successful memorial program allowed for the purchase of numerous other ecclesiastical objects for the sanctuary and for furnishings in classrooms.¹³⁹

It seemed somewhat untimely that, just when the physical surroundings were completed, the Thumms left Cullowhee for an appointment to the Biltmore United Methodist Church in Asheville, North Carolina. It was a difficult parting for all concerned. However, one of the last important arrangements the Reverend Thumm made before leaving was the development of a document outlining basic responsibilities, relationships, and operating procedures for the Cullowhee Methodist Church and the Wesley

¹³⁷Eller and Thumm interview.

¹³⁸Rowlson, "Memorial Chapel."

¹³⁹The Reverend Milford V. Thumm, Cullowhee, to the Membership of the Cullowhee Methodist Church, Cullowhee, 25 May 1961, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

Foundation.¹⁴⁰ This statement served as the basic operational guide for the next several years.

By 1961 the Cullowhee Methodist Church could review a list of significant accomplishments. The membership had relocated to the west side of campus, raised a new parsonage incorporating salvaged materials from the 1912 frame structure, and built a new brick church containing seven rooms and a main sanctuary in a record 90 days. The congregation through generous gifts had furnished the chapel with stained glass windows dedicated to the memory of loved ones and friends. By 1960 the church, involved in a new building project, had effectively doubled in size to accommodate the growing physical needs of the Wesley Foundation and the Sunday school. The Wesley Foundation program in reality provided a "home away from home" for numerous Western Carolina College students. The scope of programs for the Women's Society of Christian Service and for the Methodist Men's Club began to address needs not only on a community level, but on a national and international level as well. As the decade of the 1960s began, the larger, stronger, and more diversified Cullowhee Methodist Church stood ready to face the newly emerging national issues of civil rights, challenges to the traditional family

¹⁴⁰"Statement of Agreement of Wesley Foundation of Western Carolina College and Cullowhee Methodist Church, 1 January 1962" Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

and society, and the beginning of the most controversial war in the history of the United States.

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Affirmation of Faith: 1962-1990

It seemed a golden time--a time of promise, of dreams fulfilled, of challenges met directly and with success. Such were the characteristics of the beginning of the decade of the 1960s. But the promise of the era soon changed. Promises were half-kept or not kept at all, one woke from dreams too soon for real progress, challenges seemed overwhelming as the decade passed. The nation was rocked by the assassinations of a president, a black civil rights leader, and a presidential nominee as well as numerous acts of violence against others. Americans were involved in a military conflict that deeply divided the nation and led to mass demonstrations condemning its Vietnam war policies. A president lost the trust of the nation and resigned in disgrace. A hostage crisis in Iran proved that American "might" does not always prevail. The energy crisis of the early 1970s emphasized the wide-spread consumption and depletion of the nation's and world's resources.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that all events of this thirty-year period were failures. Progress was achieved with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which guaranteed minorities equal rights before the law. Major federal programs, including those dealing with welfare and regional planning, altered the rural patterns of

a nation. A growing consciousness about the crisis in energy eventually led to an awareness of all types of environmental issues. And the development of computers and satellite systems began a revolution in communication.

Regionally, as federal funds paid for highway improvements, tourism became a fast growing business in western North Carolina. Some tourists visited only for the summer months, boosting small town businesses and regional activities. Others stayed to affect the political, economic, and social life of communities over a longer period of time. Conversely, as the highways opened the region to the nation, the area was drained of some of its talented youth who used the roads as new avenues to adventure. Even the patterns of agriculture, which had long been based on growing staple crops, were diversified to include fish hatcheries and Christmas tree farming.¹⁴¹

By the mid-1960s the local public schools were integrated with few incidents. Of more controversy was the consolidation of Sylva and Webster schools into the one high school, Sylva-Webster High School. A number of smaller "feeder" elementary schools were also consolidated to form Smokey Mountain, Fairview, Camp Lab, and Scotts Creek schools. Fairview School, with its pod design of classrooms without walls, reflected a propensity to experiment with new

¹⁴¹John L. Bell, "Economic Activities," in The History of Jackson County, 147-151.

teaching methods.¹⁴² Western Carolina College became Western Carolina University in 1967 and by 1970 reported a student enrollment of over 5,000.¹⁴³ The dramatic rise in enrollment required additional faculty which brought large numbers of well-educated, more liberal graduates from schools all over the country. The diversity of the new faculty members led to the representation of other religious denominations in the county including St. Mary's (Catholic), Shepherd of the Hills (Lutheran), and Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon).¹⁴⁴

For the Cullowhee Methodist Church dreams had turned to reality with the completion of the new educational wing and Methodist Student Center by mid-1961. The Reverend Avery A. Ferguson arrived in the summer of 1961 to begin his four-year pastorate at the Cullowhee Methodist Church. The construction of the educational wing and Methodist Student Center was completed with the laying of the cornerstone on October 8, 1961, but work on the church continued.¹⁴⁵

Several landscaping projects were initiated by church and community groups in 1963 to improve the outside appearance of the renovated church. A portion of the

¹⁴²Jean Ellen Magers, "Education," The History of Jackson County, 308-317.

¹⁴³Wilson and Davis, "The Cullowhee United Methodist Church and The Methodist Church's Ministry at Western Carolina University 1971," 1.

¹⁴⁴Lovin, 264-267.

¹⁴⁵The Sylva Herald, 28 September 1961.

driveway between the church and the Cullowhee Post Office was paved. The Women's Society of Christian Service continued to be successful in raising money for projects, like the improvements to the fellowship/social room, although in 1962 they had ended one of their larger projects of serving monthly dinners to the Lions Club.¹⁴⁶

Following a pattern established by the Thumms, the Reverend and Mrs. Ferguson devoted much of their time to the Wesley Foundation. By 1965 the success of the Wesley Foundation program and the increased growth of Western Carolina College, which reported an enrollment of 2,500, led to the first adjustment in scheduling worship services.¹⁴⁷ A 9:00 a.m., half-hour worship service was added to accommodate students and others wishing to attend an earlier service. The Wesley Foundation program remained essentially the same. This period of relative tranquility was followed by another series of changes whose negative repercussions affected the church and the Wesley Foundation.

In 1965 the Cullowhee Methodist Church experienced a change in both the ministerial and the Wesley Foundation campus ministry positions. Previously, all persons holding these positions had been minister and wife teams who served both the congregation and Wesley Foundation. However, the

¹⁴⁶Board of Trustees Minutes, 1962-1965, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁴⁷Facts About Cullowhee, North Carolina, Prepared by the Office of Public Information, Western Carolina College, July, 1965, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

time had arrived when the responsibilities inherent in each role necessitated the hiring of a full-time professional for each position. The Reverend Harlan Creech was appointed as minister to Cullowhee Methodist Church. At the same time, an effort was begun to employ the first full-time director for the Wesley Foundation. Several people interviewed for the full-time position. The Board of Directors of the Wesley Foundation selected the Reverend Mark Rose of Franklin who had recently served as pastor of the Franklin Circuit in Macon County. The Board also began the process of purchasing a house for the new Wesley Foundation director.¹⁴⁸

The Reverend Mark Rose was very popular with the Wesley Foundation students.¹⁴⁹ His program emphasized outdoor recreational activities, including camping, hiking, and boating. He also organized money earning opportunities for the students such as wood-cutting jobs.¹⁵⁰ It is unclear whether these jobs provided funds for personal student needs or whether they supplemented Wesley Foundation programs.

¹⁴⁸Ned Tucker, Cullowhee to Members of Board of Directors, Wesley Fellowship Foundation, Western Carolina College, circa 1966, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹⁴⁹This information has been gathered through a series of interviews recently completed by the author. Before 1972, the Cullowhee Methodist Church had no permanent secretarial position for either the Church or Wesley Foundation. Church records were often kept by volunteers or traveled with the departing ministers. Thus there are few church records to view for the Rose/Creech period.

¹⁵⁰Eller and Stewart interviews.

Likewise, the Reverend Creech performed his duties in a timely, capable manner.¹⁵¹ However, personal problems arose almost immediately between the Reverend Creech and the Reverend Rose. The organizational structure between the church and the Wesley Foundation, which had previously been a shared responsibility of husband/wife teams, was not sufficient for two separate entities. Misconceptions about the responsibilities of each position led to conflicts between Creech and Rose. A new suggested plan concerning the organizational structure of the church and the Wesley Foundation was formulated by Dean W. E. Bird.¹⁵² Though this plan was accepted by both ministers, the conflict had progressed too far for harmony to be achieved. The situation created increasingly difficult times for the entire church membership as some felt compelled to support one position or the other. Memories of this period are often painfully described with words such as "hard," "difficult," "bad," and "terrible."¹⁵³ The situation was resolved in 1966 with the reassignment of both men. The Reverend Creech left to serve a church in Fletcher, North Carolina, while the Reverend Rose was reassigned to a post

¹⁵¹James Gudger, Cullowhee, to Mark Q. Tuttle, Superintendent, Lake Junaluska, 13 April 1966, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁵²James Gudger, Cullowhee, to Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Charlotte, 28 April 1966, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁵³Eller and Stewart interviews.

in Cruso, North Carolina.¹⁵⁴ Dean W. E. Bird's plan was approved by the local boards and district officials as well as by the Inter-Conference Commission and was later implemented by the newly appointed minister and Wesley Foundation director in 1966.¹⁵⁵

During the transition period, the Wesley Foundation Board "employed Mrs. Mary Jo Boswell, a former W.F. member, now teaching in the Camp Laboratory School to supervise the center during the next 60 days or Summer school."¹⁵⁶ A personnel committee was appointed to deal with the selection of a permanent Wesley Foundation Director. It was hoped that a new director could fill the post by August 1, 1966. The Wesley Foundation would then be organized and ready for the fall term at Western Carolina College.

The Reverend George Weekley fortuitously heard about this job through a friend, Bill Wells. Wells was at that time State Director of Campus Ministry for the Methodist Student Movement of North Carolina. He mentioned the position to Weekley while the Weekley family was vacationing in Durham, North Carolina. Weekley applied for the job during the summer, visited the church and campus for an interview in August, and was appointed Associate Pastor and

¹⁵⁴At this writing, the Reverend Harlan Creech continues in the ministry of The United Methodist Church, while Mark Rose has left the ministry for another profession.

¹⁵⁵Ned Tucker, Cullowhee, to Rev. M. Q. Tuttle, Lake Junaluska, 1 July 1966, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹⁵⁶Ibid. *See* United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

Director of the Wesley Foundation in September 1966.¹⁵⁷

A long-time interest in youth work was evident in the Reverend Weekley's training. While studying at Duke Divinity School, his major areas of emphasis had been in teaching and research. During seven years as Associate Minister at the Church in the Gardens (Congregational) in Forest Hills, New York, he had been very active in youth work.¹⁵⁸ By the summer of 1965, Weekley had expressed interest in working with a Wesley Foundation. All of these factors combined to show a strong interest and serious dedication to youth--a fact not missed by the personnel committee. The Reverend Vaudry Williams, who had arrived only a few weeks earlier, reported that "he made a wonderful impression on the interviewing committee, especially the two students on it. Of all we contacted, he would certainly be my first choice."¹⁵⁹ George Weekley was invited to join Williams in the Cullowhee mission.

When the Reverend Vaudry Williams was appointed to the Cullowhee church by the 1965 annual conference, he found that several projects required immediate attention. A new

¹⁵⁷The Reverend George Weekley, Associate Pastor and Director of the Wesley Foundation, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 21 March 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

¹⁵⁸The Reverend Vaudry Williams, Cullowhee, to Advocate, Greensboro, undated, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹⁵⁹The Reverend Vaudry Williams, Cullowhee, to Dr. Mark Tuttle, Waynesville, 30 August 1966, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

church-sponsored Week Day School or Kindergarten was needed to serve the community. A new parsonage was needed to replace the parsonage adjacent to the church as well as improvements to the church driveway and parking lot. Greater involvement with the Jackson County Ministerial Association was an agenda item for Williams also. Despite or perhaps because of the complexity and number of issues he faced, Williams reported "the overwhelming impression that strikes a new minister here is the wealth of potential here."¹⁶⁰

The Week Day School was the outgrowth of a former child care program operated by the Cullowhee Methodist Church under the direction of Miss Anne Rabe. By the late 1960s Miss Rabe's age and health had become matters of concern for the church members. There was no public kindergarten in North Carolina at this time, and the church wished to continue this type of service to the community.

Mrs. Kathleen Flynn and family had moved from Raleigh to Cullowhee in August 1966, when her husband, Paul, was employed by Western Carolina College. Mrs. Flynn had previous experience directing and teaching in a kindergarten program in Raleigh. Within days of their arrival in Cullowhee, Mrs. Flynn was approached by Mrs. Jo Edith Burchfield and Mrs. Paul Reid, members of the church committee, about the matter of directing the new

¹⁶⁰Report of Pastor, 9 September 1966, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

kindergarten for the church. She accepted and was joined by Mrs. Linda Martin and approximately 26 children for the first year of operation.¹⁶¹

The kindergarten curriculum centered around "hands-on" learning activities and lots of playtime. The program met on the second floor of the education building from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon weekdays. The church provided the space, utilities, and janitorial service as well as initial start-up operating funds of \$500.¹⁶² The program was designed to be self-sustaining with salaries and other expenses paid from monthly fees charged to families. Several years later a four-year old group was added to the program.¹⁶³

By mid-1967 several important financial goals of the Cullowhee Methodist Church were reached. The debt for the educational building and Wesley Foundation wing, which eventually totaled \$180,000, was reported completely paid off in May 1967. The parking lot behind the church was paved at a cost of \$6,000, and an agreement was reached with the college to rent the lot for student parking at the rate of \$800 per year. A new \$32,000 parsonage, located atop the

¹⁶¹Mrs. Kathleen Flynn, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 21 September 1990, and Mrs. Sarah Williams, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 9 January 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tapes in possession of author, Webster.

¹⁶²Report of Pastor, 2 May 1967, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁶³Flynn and Williams interviews.

hill behind the church, was nearing completion.¹⁶⁴

A committee for furnishing the new parsonage contracted with a talented, local cabinetmaker, Louis Carter, to provide several pieces of quality-crafted furniture made from solid walnut, wormy chestnut, and other native woods to make the new home a lovely setting.¹⁶⁵ As the Reverend Williams noted, the new parsonage was "furnished in a manner which is exceedingly beautiful."¹⁶⁶

Along with the recently initiated Week Day School, other social concerns included a county-wide "Council of Community Services" which had evolved from a Cullowhee Methodist Church study course on poverty. This group, composed of representatives from the community churches and county organizations, led efforts to improve the quality of life for other Jackson County residents.¹⁶⁷

An official "open door" policy on race was adopted by the Cullowhee Methodist Church in 1967. Results of this policy were evident in the active pursuit of black students to attend Sunday services and Wesley Foundation programs. Mrs. Estes Casey became the first black woman to join the Women's Society of Christian Service group at the church.

¹⁶⁴Report of Pastor and Board of Trustees Minutes, 1967, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁶⁵Brown interview.

¹⁶⁶Report of Pastor, 1 October 1967, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁶⁷Report of Pastor, 1967, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

Also, Mr. Herman Thomas, a black student at Duke University, was invited to work as a summer intern at Cullowhee Methodist Church during the summer of 1967.¹⁶⁸

Other church improvements included the publication of a newsletter, started by Mrs. Connie Hicks, to promote fellowship and communication between church members. Plans were made to begin a church library.¹⁶⁹ Also, discussions began on establishing a policy regarding care of the church cemetery. The cemetery, located near the new parsonage, was originally owned by the R. Hamilton Brown family. In June 1957 Frank and Hattie Brown, Sr., deeded the property to the Cullowhee Methodist Church.¹⁷⁰ However, for many years following the transfer of property, members of the Brown family continued to provide care for the cemetery area. The membership now began to plan for the continual administration, care, and upkeep of the cemetery property.

In May 1967, the Reverend Williams reported that "peace reigns in the relationship between the local church and the Wesley Foundation."¹⁷¹ The divisive situation which had existed between the previous minister and Wesley Foundation director was no longer an issue. No doubt a portion of this success was due to the compatible personalities of the

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Jackson County Deed Book, Book 222, 1957, Sylva Courthouse, 412.

¹⁷¹Report of Pastor, 2 May 1967, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

Reverend Williams and the Reverend Weekley. Also, the commitment and backing of the entire congregation to make this situation work surely contributed to the success the church enjoyed by 1967. However, the church soon faced challenges of a new nature which directly affected the student population, indeed the entire population of Cullowhee and the nation.

The escalation of the Vietnam War, the rise in popularity of a youthful counter-culture, and the continued impact of civil rights demonstrations left no shortage of issues to be addressed and discussed. Frank and open deliberation of these issues was part of the solution. Sermons delivered by the Reverend Williams were often presented as "worrying outloud" sessions aimed at searching for the "right" decisions.¹⁷² Active participation was also encouraged to help Western Carolina College students confront these complex issues. One example of this action philosophy was a trip to Atlanta, Georgia, in April 1968 by the Reverend Williams, the Reverend Weekley, and a group of students to attend the funeral of slain Civil Rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.¹⁷³ The church also participated in several community ecumenical services in honor of Dr. King.

In 1968 two important national changes occurred in The

¹⁷²Mrs. Connie Hicks, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 7 March 1990, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

¹⁷³Weekley interview.

Methodist Church. The first was the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church.¹⁷⁴ Cullowhee Methodist joined this unifying action with a change in name to Cullowhee United Methodist Church. Secondly, the Central Jurisdiction of The Methodist Church, which was composed of black churches only, was abolished.¹⁷⁵ Henceforth, these churches were considered to be part of the regular pre-existing conference organizations of the United Methodist Church.¹⁷⁶

Reflective of a society which searched for answers during this decade, the Reverend Williams also guided the church through several "experiments in worship."¹⁷⁷ Musically, a "Contemporary Jazz Worship Service," presented in early 1968 received mixed reviews from the congregation. Also, Mr. Dick Trevarthen, who succeeded Dr. Richard Renfro as choir director, composed several original musical selections which the church choir presented to the

¹⁷⁴George W. Bumgarner and James E. Carroll, The Flowering of Methodism in Western North Carolina (The Commission on Archives and History of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1984), 16.

¹⁷⁵Ina W. and John J. Van Noppen, Western North Carolina Since the Civil War (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1973), 78.

¹⁷⁶Bumgarner and Carroll, The Flowering of Methodism in Western North Carolina, 9-10.

¹⁷⁷Report of Pastor, 18 April 1968, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

congregation.¹⁷⁸ At the same time the church purchased one hundred copies of an older edition of Methodist hymns.¹⁷⁹

Plans also began for a combined celebration and dedication of the educational building and Wesley Foundation facility as well as the consecration and "open house" for the new parsonage. Only landscaping remained to be completed at the new parsonage.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps it was with the upcoming celebration in mind that the Reverend Williams decided to complete some outside tree cutting at the parsonage. Tragically, he was accidentally killed on May 31, 1968, while performing this task. The Cullowhee Methodist Church membership drew close during this tragic time.¹⁸¹ Mrs. Williams requested that a special scholarship fund be established for the four Williams children in lieu of flowers. The generous support which the fund received reflected an outpouring of love from a devoted and saddened congregation.

During the interim summer months, the Reverend Weekley served ably as pastor until the appointment of the Reverend James C. Gilland. Arriving when he did, during some of the most critical times of questioning for the American nation as well as the Cullowhee community, it is not surprising

¹⁷⁸Williams interview.

¹⁷⁹Report of Pastor, 18 April 1968, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Hicks and Eller interviews.

that the Reverend Gilland faced a challenging ministry.

One of the critical needs that the Reverend Gilland recognized upon arrival in 1968 was the problem of inadequate space at the Cullowhee church. Although a major addition had been completed recently, the space problem in the church was acute. This need was largely due to two factors. The first was the precipitous growth of Western Carolina, which had gained university status in 1967. Enrollment in 1968 was 4,000 students.¹⁸² The second factor was the incredible success of the Wesley Foundation program which drew "an average of 250 students...attending Sunday morning worship service."¹⁸³ A report filed by the Director of Research, Planning and Development of the Divinity School, Duke University, and by the President of Brevard College noted the need for a sanctuary which would be doubled in size, the need for a new fellowship hall, and the need for more church school classrooms for the Cullowhee Methodist Church to accommodate projected growth of the University.¹⁸⁴ But as the Reverend Gilland reported, the "160 resident members [who] now carry a budget of \$29,000 can't undertake a new sanctuary for \$250,000 to

¹⁸²Blethen and Wood, A Mountain Heritage, 139.

¹⁸³James Gudger and Gerald Eller, Cullowhee, to Mr. Gordon Goodson, Durham, 20 April 1968, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁸⁴Wilson and Davis, 1-6.

\$300,000."¹⁸⁵ Supplemental funding would have to be found, but no immediate solution was forthcoming. The church continued to hold two worship services on Sunday morning and effectively utilized all available space.

By the early 1970s the church faced other pressing issues. The disintegration of formerly active church groups like the Women's Society of Christian Service and the Methodist Men's Club heralded the stresses and strains on family life in Cullowhee. As more women entered the workplace or school, less time was available to devote to church social groups.¹⁸⁶ The men's group had been heavily composed of faculty and staff members of the college. As their administrative and teaching responsibilities grew in conjunction with university development, they too found limited time for extra church activities.

University students also struggled with contemporary issues. Though somewhat removed from most of the violence which developed in many American cities in the early 1970s, several students and the Reverend George Weekley were involved in a bombing incident that occurred in New York City on March 22, 1970. The students, including several from the Wesley Foundation, were in New York during Spring break to participate in an inter-denominational convention. While visiting a popular, non-alcoholic discotheque, The

¹⁸⁵Report of Pastor, 24 November 1968, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁸⁶Brown interview.

Electric Circus, a pipe bomb exploded injuring eight students. One of the students sustained severe leg injuries. Police later identified a member of the Black Panther Party as the person responsible for placing the pipe bomb at that location. The Reverend Weekley remained in New York City until all students were returned safely to their homes.¹⁸⁷

After 1973 the return of many Vietnam veterans to campus created new and challenging counseling roles for the Reverend Weekley. A program which developed during this time was the Coffee House Ministry. This ministry was an ecumenical effort held on alternate Friday evenings at the new Hinds University Student Center. Films, concerts, and dramas were sponsored by the Wesley Foundation and other community groups. Fellowship and free-flowing dialogue were two of the main responses to the Coffee House Ministry.¹⁸⁸ A later outgrowth of this joint effort was the formation of the United Campus Ministry, an example of, "the contemporary spirit of denominational cooperation."¹⁸⁹ This group, composed of campus and congregational ministers, worked cooperatively to pool its resources in planning for the

¹⁸⁷The Sylva Herald, 26 March 1970; and The Western Carolinian, 7 April 1970.

¹⁸⁸"Study Committee On Ministry To The Campus of Wesley Foundation Western Carolina University," 30 September 1977, p. 6, Wesley Foundation files, Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee.

¹⁸⁹Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1967, 266.

religious and spiritual growth of the university community.

In 1968, when Gilland arrived, membership at the Cullowhee United Methodist Church was reported at 255.¹⁹⁰ Though attendance was reported as good, growth was slow. In 1976, the last year of the Reverend Russell Burson's pastorate, membership was 259.¹⁹¹ However, membership began to rise by the late 1970s. In a 1980 pastoral report, the Reverend Ronald A. Koonts reported a membership of 290.¹⁹² This growth reflected again the strong ties to the University community which was "settling down after some years of frequent administrative changes" prior to the arrival of Chancellor H. F. Robinson in 1974.¹⁹³ Koonts also recognized and praised the leadership of the Reverend Weekley and the effectiveness of the Wesley Foundation programs as factors which contributed to growth.¹⁹⁴

As the newly appointed minister, the Reverend Carrol R. Lindsey perceived upon his arrival in 1980 that there was a "sense of renewal for the church."¹⁹⁵ Over the next seven years, renewal was much in evidence at the Cullowhee United

¹⁹⁰Report of Pastor, 18 April 1968, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁹¹Report of Pastor, 31 October 1976, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁹²Report of Pastor, 20 October 1980, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

¹⁹³Ministerial Survey.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

Methodist Church. As North Carolina turned to public supported kindergartens, the church-sponsored kindergarten was supplanted by a private nursery school. The Church Board continued to believe that this service was needed in the community and charged the school only for maintenance costs.

Several projects to improve the Cullowhee United Methodist Church were undertaken between 1981 and 1987. For example, a new digital computerized organ and sound system were purchased in 1983. The church's administrative offices were moved from the Parish House to a renovated area located on the lower floor of the church building.¹⁹⁶ Projects in support of various families and local agencies were carried out at Christmas and other times. In 1985 the newly re-formed United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men turned their resources to local, national, and international mission projects.¹⁹⁷

However, one of the main projects which received attention from the Cullowhee membership began about 1982 when Mrs. Florence Sumner approached the Chairman of the

¹⁹⁶For many years following construction of the new parsonage, the former parsonage, located adjacent to the church, was utilized as rental property. However, between 1973 and 1981, the church's administrative offices were located in the old parsonage, then called the "Parish House." After the offices were relocated in 1981, the Parish House was utilized as rental property for small businesses. On July 4, 1987, the Parish House was destroyed by fire. At the present time, a portion of the property is used as a parking area.

¹⁹⁷Reports of Pastor, 1981-1987, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

Work Area on Social Concerns, Mr. John Lively, with the idea of the church sponsoring a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) project to build a rent subsidized apartment complex for the elderly and handicapped of Jackson County. The project, first proposed by the Jackson County Council on Aging, was approved by the church board. The Cullowhee United Methodist Church became the sponsor/borrower of the project with responsibility for appointing a board of directors for the planning, construction, and operation of the endeavor. The board was composed of nine members from the Cullowhee United Methodist Church and six from the Jackson County Council on Aging.¹⁹⁸

Construction began on January 1, 1986, at an estimated cost of \$835,000 for 24 one-bedroom apartments. The project was completed by August 1, 1986. The "Jackson Village" project was dedicated on October 12, 1986, with over half of the apartments already occupied.¹⁹⁹

The Cullowhee United Methodist Church was truly renewed during the Lindsey years, not only through service to the community but in membership also. Membership was reported at 309 in 1987 when the Reverend Lindsey departed for a new appointment at Forest City, North Carolina.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸Mrs. Florence Sumner, of Sylva, and Mr. John Lively, of Sylva, interview by author, 16 March 1990, Sylva and Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

¹⁹⁹The Sylva Herald (Sylva), 16 October 1986.

²⁰⁰Report of Pastor, 27 October 1985, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

The Reverend John S. Boggs arrived in 1987 and noted several initial impressions. He noted first an abundance of "caring leadership."²⁰¹ Next he recognized the strong emphasis on children and youth programs which had helped to bring many young families into the church. There was also great enthusiasm for remodeling the kitchen as well as movement toward establishing a Long-Range Planning Board to research again the possibilities of expansion.²⁰²

The Long-Range Planning Board, appointed in 1987, recognized three areas which needed attention: 1) the education space, 2) the fellowship area, and 3) the worship area. The Architectural Design Group of Waynesville, North Carolina, presented a Master Plan proposal in August 1988 recommending a major renovation and building program.²⁰³ However, the estimated cost of \$840,000 was prohibitive even with outside funding from the North Carolina State Commission on Campus Ministry, the Duke Endowment, and the Western North Carolina Annual Conference. The church membership could not realistically be expected to raise the remaining funds needed. Additionally there was much reluctance to give up the present sanctuary as the major place of worship. The anticipated "loss of a space which

²⁰¹Report of Pastor, 30 September 1987, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

²⁰²Ibid. Report of Pastor, 5 November 1987, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

²⁰³Cullowhee United Methodist Church Newsletter, September 1988, unpagged, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

holds treasured memories" created anxious feelings among a portion of the membership.²⁰⁴

Several optional building plans were discussed by the church's Administrative Board at its meeting of February 27, 1991. Although no final decisions were reached, it was decided that the total building project would be scaled down and reintroduced in a phased sequence over a period of several years. The most immediate plans include the design of a fellowship hall plus classroom space not to exceed \$250,000 in cost.²⁰⁵

Apart from contingency plans being developed for the building project, the congregation's energies were channeled into other areas. The church newsletter won an award for excellence at the Western North Carolina Annual Conference in 1987. A new team approach for Sunday School was begun. A new evangelistic effort known as the J. O. Y. Club (Jesus Others Yourself) was begun for children, representing a larger mission effort of working with area churches to provide services to local and transient people. The United Christian Ministry of Jackson County, Inc., emerged from this new community mission effort. Today, the United Christian Ministries receives funding and volunteer staff from the Cullowhee United Methodist Church as well as from other area churches.

²⁰⁴Report of Pastor, 5 November 1989, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

²⁰⁵Administrative Board Minutes, 27 February 1991, Cullowhee Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

The Christmas Service Project was extended to become part of a coordinated community "Christmas Store" program designed to serve families referred by the Jackson County Department of Social Services. In 1990 the Cullowhee United Methodist Church membership sponsored twenty-four families ranging in size from one to seventeen. Donations from church members provided recipient families an opportunity to select groceries and other household items, clothing, and children's toys.²⁰⁶

While some minor changes were made in the Sunday morning worship service, the major changes occurred on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. P.E.W. Call (People Enjoying Worship: Christians As Liturgical Laity), held on Sunday evenings in the fellowship hall, presented an alternative worship experience. On Wednesday evenings a new Wonderful Wednesday program offered a family style meal followed by church business meetings or special programs.²⁰⁷

Other special seasonal programs were initiated. In 1989 Moravian students, active in the Wesley Foundation, helped plan and coordinate the first Lovefeast. This program quickly became an annual Christmas ritual.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶Mrs. Elaine White, of Cullowhee, interview by author, 6 March 1991, Cullowhee, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

²⁰⁷Reports of Pastor, 1989-1990, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

²⁰⁸Ibid.

From the turbulent 1960s to the challenging 1990s the Cullowhee United Methodist Church progressed through some difficult times. The security of the Cullowhee valley had been rocked by a series of vibrations echoing from a nation uneasy with its role in Vietnam, a growing consciousness about inequality in the American system, and a restlessness within its society. The church was well served during these years by a number of highly qualified ministers who were often challenged by the needs of the congregation. The physical facilities had been greatly improved and have now been challenged to expanded further to accommodate a membership which hovers around three hundred. As one member has succinctly stated "things are going well--possibilities unlimited".²⁰⁹ This seems an appropriate epitaph for the years 1960 to 1990 and an excellent perspective for the membership of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church as they face the twenty-first century.

²⁰⁹Cullowhee United Methodist Church Booklet of Reports 1988, unpagged, Cullowhee United Methodist Church files, Cullowhee.

religious services held on the campus throughout the
years. The church's relations with the black community have been
close and cordial. The Postlude The 1910s, when
the Sunday School was started, to the present day.

The history of any organization is a composite of many factors. As suggested previously these include such factors as geographic location, the personalities involved in the organization's history, the tenor of the times or Zeitgeist, and that indefinable quality of "spirit."

The conception and development of the Cullowhee Methodist Church was an outgrowth of one hundred fifty years of Methodism which began with John Wesley's doctrine of free grace and salvation offered to all believers. The message spread throughout England and was then transported to the American frontier. Dedicated itinerant preachers, like Bishop Asbury, supported by a dedicated laity, ministered to regions like the western North Carolina frontier utilizing the circuit systems and camp meetings. The Cullowhee church became part of the western North Carolina circuit system and was in its early years served by several itinerant preachers.

The geographic configuration of the Cullowhee Valley has no doubt contributed to the long-standing tradition of shared facilities and resources among Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians which is still in evidence to the present day. This cooperation and sharing extends to the school, Western Carolina University, as evidenced by the

many ecumenical services held on the campus throughout the years.

Likewise relations with the black community have been continuous and cordial. Dating from the 1920s, when sharing teachers for Sunday School was common, to the present day, when the Cullowhee United Methodist Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church annually celebrate the birthdate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., unity is a common theme in this mountain community.

The characteristics of a "shared" community are recognizable in other ways. However, there is one factor which seems to set the history of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church apart from other organizations in the mountain region. The overwhelming factor that cannot be ignored is the significant symbiotic relationship between the Cullowhee Methodist Church and Western Carolina University. Like siblings close in age, the church and university have experienced many of the same life passages at the same level of organizational development.

The 1889 founding of the University preceded the founding of the church by only five years. The first meeting place of the Methodist membership in the community was in the schoolhouse of the Cullowhee Academy. Several founding members of the Cullowhee church were founders of the school. These included Robert L. Madison, Lewis J. Smith, J. David Coward, William C. Norton, and R. Hamilton Brown. Obviously these civic-minded individuals were

interested in building a community and had already conceived the idea, published later in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference Minutes, that "the church and the school-should together form the center of community life, and that preacher and teacher should be the natural leaders and moulders of this community life."²¹⁰

The symbiotic relationship was strengthened in other ways. The first Cullowhee Methodist Church was sited by Ida Rogers Cotter in what she saw to be the center of the campus community, and until the mid-1920s this was true. However, with the growth of the school came the need to extend the boundaries. During the 1920s several land purchases shifted the campus "center" toward the western boundary. The 1935 property swap between the school and the church sited Cullowhee Methodist in its present location on the western edge of the campus. Ironically, as the school continued to grow through the 1930s and 1940s, the center of campus came to be closer to this newest location. By the early 1950s, when the wartime "Boodleville" was replaced by the new Albright-Benton dormitories, the church was once more encircled geographically by the campus. Today, the church grounds are traversed hourly by Western students on their way to and from classes, dining halls, and dormitories.

As both the school and church struggled with limited financial and human resources, they quickly developed the

²¹⁰Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1915, 40.

idea of sharing the talents each had to offer. Robert L. Madison served as an early Methodist church lay leader as well as director of the Cullowhee school. This pattern of university leaders and faculty serving in critical church roles such as board members, chairpersons, and teachers has continued over the decades. Likewise, many of the competent and well-educated ministers who have served the Cullowhee church have also taught for the University. Beginning with L. B. Abernethy in 1912, at least nine ministers of the church have served simultaneously on the university faculty, teaching a variety of subjects including religion, music, and mathematics.²¹¹

Since the 1950s the ministers to the Cullowhee Methodist Church have been an especially well-educated and experienced group. Most were college graduates with additional seminary training and had prior experience with several churches before coming to Cullowhee. It is clear that the Methodist leadership has understood the special needs of this church for well-educated ministers with diversity of experience for dealing with a heterogeneous population composed of local residents, faculty, and university students. The Cullowhee church environment has created special challenges for all ministers. One former minister reported his tenure in Cullowhee as "the most

²¹¹Bird, The History of Western Carolina College, 275-284.

important charge given to me in 44 years of ministry."²¹² (See Appendix A "The Minister's Moments," for a complete analysis of the Ministerial Survey).

The church and the school have developed a shared interest in another important element of the community, the students of Western Carolina University. Regardless of religious affiliation, the leaders of the school have consistently maintained an interest, not only in the intellectual preparation of its youth, but the spiritual preparation as well. President H. T. Hunter, a staunch Baptist, first proposed the idea of local ministers teaching religion courses at the school. Although his first efforts were apparently not instituted, later Cullowhee Methodist Church ministers did teach religion at the university.

During the late 1920s the school newspaper began to mention church-related activities available to students at both the Baptist and Methodist churches. In the small rural community of Cullowhee, it was not unusual for students, faculty, and staff to interact with one another on a daily basis both at and away from school. The fact that several people were teachers of students during the week and on Sundays had a tremendous potential for shaping and forming the values and morals of these youth. The formation of the Wesley Foundation was surely an outgrowth of this harmonious relationship that was a part of the early pattern of church and school.

²¹²Ministerial Survey.

Churches and universities today often utilize each other's resources as has been the case in Cullowhee for more than seventy years. In many ways the challenges presented to students to learn both academic content and ethical standards require this type of relationship to complement the lessons each institution has to teach. The University often looks for guidance on the issues of basic humanity, ethics, and morals to the religious leaders on or near campus. As one university chapel director recently stated, "when there are conversations about what it means to be a community, about diversity, about justice--economic and political--I want them to think...of the people here as resources...."²¹³ But perhaps the best description of the success of the Wesley Foundation of Cullowhee United Methodist Church is echoed in the comments of a Western Carolina University administrator, "This is a kind of back-up for everything else we do here...it really is important...it's something that the University doesn't provide for people for whom religion is important."²¹⁴

The Cullowhee church has always responded to the times and circumstances of its existence. Energies in the early years were dominated by founding and building a church. As

²¹³The Chronicle of Higher Education, 28 March 1990, A35-36.

²¹⁴Dr. Clifford R. Lovin, currently Dean of Arts and Sciences, Western Carolina University, Wesley Foundation Board member, and past chairman of the North Carolina State Commission on Campus Ministry, Cullowhee, interview by author, 8 March 1990, cassette recording, tape in possession of author, Webster.

those things were accomplished, the church directed its efforts toward community, national, and international mission projects. The Cullowhee church has a strong social commitment and involvement in the local community as noted by their leadership in several Jackson County projects. They have also struggled through difficult national times seeking innovative programs to meet new challenges of all types whether from the death of a civil rights leader, the continuation of a divisive war, or from any other source.

And finally, there has always been the presence of that indefinable quality of "spirit." It is not the intent of this paper to address the presence of the Divine Spirit which overrides all earthly events chronicled here. Rather the "spirit" described here is that joining of individuals dedicated to a larger undertaking. Therefore, it is not surprising that names like Smith and Coward, Bird and Sutton, Brown and Crum, Battle and Williams, Lovin and Stewart, Medlin and White flow like a litany signifying concerned teachers and residents who shared in the joys and sorrows of building a church and college community together. It is that same "spirit" that will carry this church, the Cullowhee United Methodist Church, into the twenty-first century.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Minister's Moments

Ministers have a special opportunity to provide leadership and direction to their congregations. In their daily work in the church they have a unique view of their congregation and the affect of cultural influences and racial attitudes on this group. Thus, ministers develop a personal perspective on the congregation during their pastoral ministry.

The survey APPENDICES developed to gain valuable information and perceptions from each minister's tenure in Culicowee County. The survey helped to complete information and data otherwise available through church records. The researcher acknowledges the survey responses are biased. However, it was felt that the minister's perceptions added another dimension to compiling the history of the Culicowee County Methodist Church. (see page 116 for an example of the information which was developed). Following the questionnaires, each former minister was asked to provide information concerning his present professional education level (at the time of service in Culicowee or presently), the number of churches served, present affiliation to Culicowee Methodist, the size of the Culicowee congregation upon arrival and departure, and the

APPENDIX A

The Minister's Moments

Ministers have a special opportunity to provide leadership and direction to their congregations. In their daily work for the church they have a unique view of their congregations and the affect of cultural influences and major events upon this group. Thus, ministers develop a particular perspective on the congregation during their period of service.

A ministerial survey was developed to gain valuable information and perceptions from each minister's tenure in Cullowhee. Also, the survey helped to complete information which was not otherwise available through church records. The writer acknowledges the survey responses are biased. However, it was felt that the minister's perceptions added another dimension to compiling the history of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church. (see page 110 for an example of the questionnaire which was developed).

In completing the questionnaires, each former minister was asked to provide information concerning his present position, education level (at the time of service in Cullowhee and presently), the number of churches served prior to coming to Cullowhee Methodist, the size of the Cullowhee congregation upon arrival and departure, and the

town-college composition of the congregation. They were also asked to report on major events during their period of service and reflect on how these events affected the Cullowhee membership. The former ministers were asked to indicate the major challenges and accomplishments associated with their tenure in Cullowhee. The ministers were requested to name several outstanding leaders in the church during their tenure and to comment upon the roles of men and women (including their spouse) in the church at that time. Finally, each former minister was asked to give his impressions of Cullowhee upon arrival and upon his departure.

The questionnaires were mailed in the Spring of 1990 to nineteen former ministers who served the church consecutively from 1923 to 1990. The questionnaires were accompanied by a letter explaining that the survey was part of a research effort to develop a church history in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Western Carolina University and in anticipation of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church centennial in 1994. (see page 112 for an example of cover letter). Former ministers were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. Questionnaires were completed and returned by thirteen individuals. Nine questionnaires were completed and returned by the ministers themselves, and four surveys were completed by the widows of former ministers.

The former ministers' (or their widows') responses to the objective questions on the survey are summarized in Table 1. It can be seen in Table 1 that the thirteen ministers responding served the Cullowhee church for a period of time ranging from one year to eight years with the most common tenure four years. It can be seen also in Table 1 that the ministers serving the Cullowhee Methodist Church since 1923 have been a very well educated group. All but one of these ministers was a college graduate, and most were seminary prepared. The data in Table 1 concerning the number of previous churches served indicate that the ministers coming to Cullowhee during the 1920s through the 1940s were relatively inexperienced at their profession; for the majority Cullowhee was their second pulpit. Since the 1950s, however, the ministers have been a more experienced group with an average of four churches served prior to coming to Cullowhee. It can be seen in Table 1 that the church membership, as reported by the ministers, has grown slowly but steadily over the years since the early 1920s with the exception of a very significant growth spurt during the 1960s which paralleled a precipitous growth period for Western Carolina University.

Former ministers were asked to estimate the relative town and college composition of the Cullowhee Methodist Church during their tenure. These estimates from the survey respondents are summarized in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, the estimates of the percent of local residents

TABLE 1

Ministers' Responses to Objective Questions Concerning Their
Tenures At The Cullowhee Methodist Church

Respondents	Years Served	Highest Degree	Previous Churches Served	Congreg. Size at Arrival	Congreg. Size at Departure
A.W. Lynch	1923-27	B.A.	0	--	--
M.Q. Tuttle	1928-32	No Deg.	--	--	--
R.M. Hardee	1934-35	M. Div.	1	75	85
C.G. Hefner	1935-39	M. Div.	1	150	175
W.L. Lanier	1939-41	B.A.	2	--	--
M.S. Richey	1941-45	B. Div	1	150	150
R.T. Houts	1945-51	B. Mus	1	160	180
J.A. Allen	1951-53	B.A.	9	--	--
M.V. Thumm	1953-61	B. Div.	4	100	160
A.A. Ferguson	1961-65	B. Div	2	--	--
J.C. Gilland	1968-73	M. Div.	1	256	271
R.A. Koonts	1976-80	D. Min.	3	267	287
C.R. Lindsey	1980-87	M. Div.	4	270	310

TABLE 2

Ministers' Estimates of Congregation Composition During
Their Tenures at The Cullowhee Methodist Church

<u>Dates of Service</u>	<u>Local Residents</u>	<u>University Faculty</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Other</u>
1939-41	25%	25%	50%	
1941-45	20%	30%	40%	10%
1945-51	50%	40%	10%	
1951-53	25%	25%	50%	
1953-61	20%	50%	30%	
1961-65	05%	45%	50%	
1968-73	--	--	--	
1976-80	25%	55%	15%	05%
1980-87	20%	70%	10%	

comprising the congregation since 1939 has consistently ranged from 20 percent to 25 percent with two noteworthy exceptions, one large estimation during the post-World War II years and a small one during the early 1960s. Estimates of faculty participation in the congregation have shown steady growth since the early 1940s from a low of 25 percent to a high of 70 percent. Estimates of student participation have fluctuated more than any other group with peak periods in the early 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

The ministerial estimates of congregation composition indicate that faculty representation in the church has grown rather steadily over the past fifty years, while the local resident participation has remained rather constant. The fluctuation in student participation is more difficult to interpret. It is possible, as the data suggest, that factors operating at the beginning of each decade have brought large numbers of students back to church. It is equally likely, however, that ministers reporting high levels of student participation were referring to church attendance and Wesley Foundation membership, and that those ministers reporting low levels of student participation were referring to church membership. Unfortunately, the survey question to which the ministers responded ("How would you characterize the Cullowhee Methodist congregation during your service in Cullowhee?") is somewhat ambiguous.

The former ministers were asked to name the people they remembered as being outstanding leaders in the church during

their tenure in Cullowhee. Typical responses included a listing of four to eight names. Although many prominent Cullowhee families were indicated as assuming leadership roles in the church, the names of university faculty and administrators were mentioned more often in this group than the names of families not affiliated with the University. In fact approximately 80 percent of all church leaders remembered by former ministers were affiliated with the University. Many of these people were outstanding faculty and administrators at Western Carolina University. The names of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Bird, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sutton, Cecil H. Allen, Edgar Stillwell, Keith Hinds, Hiram T. Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brown, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Paul Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brown, Jr., Newton Turner, Hugh Battle, Mabel Crum, Richard Renfro, Gerald Eller, James Gudger, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Cloud, Kathleen Flynn, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Arney, Clifford Lovin, James Wallace, Elaine White, Louise Sutton, Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Wooten, James Medlin, Susie Ray and Dan Pitillo appeared often in the ministers' recollections. However, it should be noted that several non-university family names were also mentioned including the names of Dallas Wike, Victor Brown, Mr. and Mrs. David Brown, Charles Stewart, Evelyn Coward, Mr. and Mrs. John Lively, Kathy Davis, and Charles Graham.

In an attempt to understand the town-college character of the church, former ministers were asked if there were special challenges associated with serving a rural church

located in a university community. Three former pastors reported that ministering to both the university and the rural membership of the church was at times difficult and challenging. One former minister characterized the heterogeneity of the congregation as "mixed cultures." Most ministers, however, responded to this question by referring to the stressfulness involved in serving a university congregation. These ministers appeared to view the congregation as rather homogeneous and almost entirely university affiliated. In fact one former minister (Gilland) stated that "Cullowhee Methodist is not a rural church; it is a university church in a predominately rural setting."

In order to investigate the ministers' perceptions of the activities of men and women in the church, all respondents were asked if the roles of men and women differed during their ministry in Cullowhee. Seven of the ten ministers who responded to this question indicated that they could see no sex differences in the responsibilities of church members. The three ministers who indicated that males and females did play different roles in the church served the congregation during the late 1940s and 1950s. These three ministers reported that men were more likely than women to hold elected positions in the church. They reported further that men were more likely to hold administrative and teaching positions, and that men were more vocal in church meetings. It should be noted, however,

that these three ministers, who reported sex differences in congregational activities, were quick to add that womens' roles in the church were equally important, only different. As one former minister (Richey) put it, "Men (functioned) as administrators and teachers, (while) women (served) as facilitators, community binders, and (provided) pastoral activities."

There was clearly no evidence of sex role stereotyping in the activities of the wives of ministers who served Cullowhee Methodist Church. With one exception, all of the wives of ministers since 1939 have been employed outside the home while their husbands served the Cullowhee Church. Many of these women were employed as teachers in the public schools or at Western Carolina University. Three wives of the four ministers serving the church between 1968 and 1987 obtained their masters' degrees while working full-time during their husbands' period of service in Cullowhee.

The ministers were asked to report the most significant events which affected the church during their ministry in Cullowhee. Although all ministers did not respond to this question, the events which were reported were clearly influenced by the fact that the Cullowhee church serves a university community. One significant event reported was the beginning of World War II and the resulting loss of several student members of the congregation. Another minister reported the ending of World War II as a significant event in his ministry to Cullowhee because it

resulted in the return of many G.I. students. Still another minister reported that the Vietnam War had a major effect on the congregation in the early 1970s when there was a great deal of conflict concerning the appropriateness of the war and strong anti-war sentiment developed among students and faculty. This minister reported also that the rapid growth of Western Carolina University during the late 1960s and early 1970s significantly affected the Cullowhee congregation. Although some of these pivotal events reported by the former ministers relate to world-wide occurrences, such as war, others were as localized as a change in university administrators (Chancellors). All responses reinforce the fact that this church, though situated in a rural area, is located in a university setting and serves a university community.

All former ministers were asked to indicate what they believed was the most significant accomplishment(s) during their ministry in Cullowhee. There was a great deal of agreement among the responses to this question. Many ministers reported being extremely satisfied with the progress made by the Wesley Foundation in its service to students. The Reverend George Weekley was mentioned repeatedly as a dedicated and highly competent minister to university students. Also, most former pastors were pleased about their accomplishments with the building program. It seems that almost every minister who served in Cullowhee believes that his contributions to improving the physical

facilities of the church were significant.

Finally, the ministers were asked to give their impressions of Cullowhee upon their arrival and to indicate any changes in those feelings at the time of their departure. The feelings upon arrival, which were remembered by the ministers, were remarkably ambivalent. Many indicated that Cullowhee seemed to be a remote and isolated place far from family and friends. On the other hand, this small community seemed to be quiet, pleasant, and very beautiful. All ministers reported feeling welcome and being impressed with the friendliness of the congregation; yet, at the same time, many ministers felt threatened by the academic community. The comments of ministers upon leaving Cullowhee were much less equivocal. The ministers consistently reported leaving Cullowhee with the feeling that they had been happy here, and that they had indeed enjoyed their experience. It is interesting that the most frequently reported exit feelings were gratitude and appreciation for the congregation, the community, and the university. The ministers reported feeling that, through the support of the congregation, they had made significant accomplishments at Cullowhee Methodist, and that a successful ministry to such a well-educated congregation had significantly enhanced their self-confidence in dealing with future situations. Perhaps the Reverend Milford Thumm spoke for all of the pastors who have served Cullowhee United Methodist Church in saying that this was "the most important

charge given to me in 44 years of ministry. Wish we had stayed till retirement."

Methodist Church Ministerial Survey

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Time of arrival _____ (W) _____

Previous _____

Present _____

CULLOWHEE METHODIST CHURCH MINISTERIAL SURVEY

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE (H) _____ (W) _____

PRESENT POSITION _____

EDUCATION:

InstitutionDegreeYear completed

1. Cullowhee was the _____ (ex. 1, 2, 5) church I served. What was the approximate congregation size on your arrival? _____
 What was the approximate congregation size on your departure? _____
 Where did you serve immediately prior to your tenure at Cullowhee?

Where did you serve immediately after leaving Cullowhee?

2. How would you characterize the Cullowhee Methodist congregation during your service in Cullowhee? (Please list approximate % from the categories listed below).

Jackson County residents (non-faculty) _____

University faculty _____

Students _____

Other(_____) _____

TOTAL

100%

3. What significant events which impacted on the church occurred while you were minister at Cullowhee Methodist? (ex. building program, student ministry, Jackson County community programs, University expansion)

4. What do you believe was the most significant accomplishment(s) during your ministry in Cullowhee?

5. Were there special challenges associated with serving a rural church located on a university campus? If so, please elaborate.

6. Who were the people you remember as being outstanding leaders in the church during your tenure in Cullowhee? (List 5 or fewer)

7. Were the roles of men and women different in the congregation? If so, please describe.

8. What church/community activities was your spouse involved in during your ministry at Cullowhee?

9. Please share any special impressions of Cullowhee you had upon your arrival here.

Were your impressions different at the time of your departure?

10. Any additional comments?

NOTE: Perhaps you have some photographs which depict important moments in the life of the Cullowhee Methodist Church. If so, would you be willing to lend them to us to copy for this project?

Sample of Cover Letter Accompanying Ministerial Survey

TO:

FROM: Dr. Max Williams, Department Head - History
Mrs. Suzanne H. McDowell, Graduate Student - History
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

In commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Western Carolina University, the Cullowhee Methodist Church is presently preparing a history of the church. The project is directed by Dr. Max Williams, professor and head of the History department at Western Carolina University. I am a graduate student in history at Western Carolina University working on this project in conjunction with a course assignment. My responsibility is to survey the former ministers to the congregation in order to learn their impressions of the Cullowhee church during that particular period of their service. The information collected by this survey will be included with other data from oral interviews, study of documents, and review of various publications to create the church history with completion by May, 1990.

It would be most helpful if you will complete as much of the enclosed survey as you possibly can and share with us your remembrances of Cullowhee. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been provided for your convenience so that we may gather this information by March 10. I appreciate your assistance in this important project very much.

APPENDIX B

TABLE 3

Time Line of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church
Membership, Ministers, and Major Events

Year	Members	Ministers	Major Events
1890*	364***		Western North Carolina Conference Formed
1891*	290		
1892*	316		
1893*	339		
1894*	338	A.W. Jacobs	Cullowhee Methodist Church (CMC) Founded
1895*	221	R.L. Sprinkle	
1896*	375		
1897*	391	L.P. Bogle	
1898*	403	J.J. Edwards	
1899*	306		
1900*	307	J.S. Ragan	
1901*	345	E. Myers	
1902*	396		
1903*	405	V.L. Marsh	
1904*	406		
1905*	400	A.R. Bell	
1906*	382	V.E. Edwards	
1907*	444	C.H. Clyde	
1908*	441	J.A. Peeler	
1909*	436		
1910*	441	B.A. York	
1911*	447	D.R. Proffitt	
1912*	537	L.B. Abernethy	CMC Occupies First Building
1913*	536		
1914*	508	D.R. Proffitt	
1915*	526	J.L. Teague	
1916*	317		381 Deaths Reported for the Webster Circuit
1917*	387		
1918*	387	J. Cline	
1919*	395	E. Myers	
1920*	514		
1921*	537		
1922*	578	S.H. Hilliard	
1923*	153	A.W. Lynch	

TABLE 3 Continued

Year	Members	Ministers	Major Events
1924**	86		CMC Designated Cullowhee Station
1925**	88		
1926**	79		
1927**	92	J.S. Folger	First Parsonage Built
1928**	85	M.Q. Tuttle	
1929**	172		
1930**	181		
1931**	189		
1932**	100	E.C. Widenhouse	
1933**	200		
1934**	197	R.M. Hardee	
1935	75	C.G. Hefner	CMC/WCU Property Exchange
1936**	207		Second Parsonage & Church Occupied
1937**	199		
1938**	223		
1939	114	W.L. Lanier	MECS, MEC, & MPC Unite****
1940	115		
1941	117	M.S. Richey	
1942	133		
1943	133		
1944	142		
1945	148	R.T. Houts, Jr.	
1946	163		
1947	157		
1948	168		
1949	175		
1950	172		
1951	182	J.A. Allen	
1952	194		
1953	195	M.V. Thumm	
1954	204		
1955	185		
1956	198		Wesley Foundation (WF) Program Accredited
1957	184		Cemetery Property Deeded To CMC
1958	184		
1959	192		
1960	191		
1961	190	A.A. Ferguson	Educational Wing & WF Additions Completed
1962	187		
1963	202		
1964	212		
1965	220	H. Creech	First WF Director Employed

TABLE 3 Continued

Year	Members	Ministers	Major Events
1966	237	V. Williams	Second WF Director Employed Weekday Kindergarten Started
1967	242		Third Parsonage Constructed "Open Door" Policy Approved
1968	256	J.C. Gilland	MC & EUBC Merge to Form UMC*****
1969	239		
1970	244		
1971	262		
1972	274		First Secretary Employed
1973	271	R.N. Burson, Jr.	
1974	272		
1975	267		
1976	260	R.A. Koonts	
1977	271		
1978	270		
1979	271		
1980	287	C.R. Lindsey	
1981	297		
1982	290		
1983	287		
1984	293		
1985	310		
1986	302		Jackson Village Dedicated
1987	306	J.S. Boggs	Long Range Plan Board Formed Parish House Burns
1988	309		
1989	301		Jackson Co. United Christian Ministries Established
1990	334		First Moravian Lovefeast

*Number reflects the combined membership of several Webster Circuit churches.

**Number reflects the combined membership of Cullowhee & Speedwell Methodist Churches.

***Membership data from Minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conferences.

****The Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS), The Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), & The Methodist Protestant Church (MPC) unite.

*****The Methodist Church (MC) & The Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUBC) merge to form The United Methodist Church (UMC)

APPENDIX C

Twenty Years of Budget Information

The annual budgets of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church from 1971 through 1990 (with two omissions) are listed in Table 4. The amounts of increase or decrease and the percent change from year to year plus monies actually expended are presented in the table also. It can be seen in Table 4 that the church budgets more than tripled during this 20-year period with totals ranging from \$32,347 in 1970 to \$107,263 in 1990. As shown in Table 4, the budgets have increased every year since 1970 with the exceptions of 1984 and 1989 when there were small decreases. The annual increases have ranged from \$1,606 in 1978 to \$14,385 in 1986 with an average yearly increase of \$4,303 (6.94%). Finally, it can be seen that expenditures have exceeded the budgeted amounts for 14 of the 18 years that data is available and every year since 1979.

The Cullowhee United Methodist Church budget period runs from January through December of each calendar year. Monies come from interest income, loose offerings, Church Sunday School offerings, parking lot lease, rental space for the pre-school program, and from pledged and non-pledged contributions. Budgeted monies are applied to conference and district benevolences, operating and program expenses, and salaries.

TABLE 4

Cullowhee United Methodist Church Budget
For the Years 1971 to 1990

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Amount</u>	<u>Increase/ Decrease</u>	<u>% Increase or Decrease</u>	<u>Monies Expended</u>
1971	\$32,347*	--	--	\$24,799
1972	Not Known	--	--	\$25,741
1973	Not Known	--	--	\$30,394
1974	\$38,414**	--	--	\$40,827
1975	\$40,238	\$1,824	05%	\$38,338
1976	\$42,275	\$2,037	05%	\$47,746
1977	\$45,956	\$3,681	09%	\$44,780
1978	\$47,562	\$1,606	04%	\$48,476
1979	\$52,821	\$5,259	11%	\$51,617
1980	\$58,395	\$5,574	11%	\$62,306
1981	\$65,835	\$7,440	13%	\$77,378
1982	\$69,915	\$4,080	06%	\$74,844
1983	\$73,250	\$3,335	05%	\$95,561
1984	\$73,101	-\$149	00%	\$73,340
1985	\$82,324	\$9,223	13%	\$88,583
1986	\$96,709	\$14,385	18%	\$105,363
1987	\$99,509	\$2,800	03%	\$117,824
1988	\$106,703	\$7,194	07%	\$125,956
1989	\$104,638	-\$2,065	-02%	\$121,921
1990	\$107,263	\$2,625	03%	\$143,736

*Budget information is drawn from Wilson and Davis, "The Cullowhee United Methodist Church and the Church's Ministry at Western Carolina University, 1971," p.4.

**Budget information for all years except 1971 is drawn from files of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church, Cullowhee, North Carolina